EDITED BY
E. HALDEMAN-JULIUS B-782

THE EVOLUTION OF THE VIRTUE OF CHASTITY

AN EXAMINATION OF THE ORIGIN, DEVELOPMENT AND HISTORICAL OPERATION OF THE LAW OF SEXUAL PURITY

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HALDEMAN-JULIUS PUBLICATIONS
GIRARD, KANSAS

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Printed in the United States of America

INTRODUCTION

In 1922 the Protestant Episcopal Church of America held its triennial congress in Baltimore, Md. On the first day the priests and deans, the widows and spinsters, sat down with trepidation to discuss this thesis: "What are our young people seeking in their apparent revolt from the moral standards of an earlier day"? The echoes of the Revolt of Youth had penetrated into the sanctuary: the word "apparent" was, of course, a graceful concession to the ecclesiastical atmosphere. And among the amiable futilities that were addressed to the congress we find, in its published proceedings, a remarkably virile speech by the Rev. Dr. Bernard I. Bell, Warden of an Episcopalian settlement in New York, a devout and ascetic minister of the gospel.

These young folk, Dr. Bell said, merely demand "a rationale of morals" and they have "considerable difficulty in finding one." In the words of the rejuvenated Faust they hear on all sides the cry, "Thou shalt renounce, refrain, abstain," and they just ask, "WHY?" It was useless, he went on, to tell them to listen to the voice of the Lord because—apart from many other and serious difficulties—Jesus had never given such an order! Jesus, he said, was quite out of sympathy with "the current legalism in regard to impurity" and in the only reference to it—his saying that to look with desire at a pretty girl is as bad as adultery—ascribed to him in the gospels he was merely showing the "absurdity" of the asceticism of the Pharisees. Remember the merry feast at Cana and Mary of Magdala, Dr. Bell told the shuddering puritans. All that you can do is to convince our young folk that "the joys of spiritual aspiration" are much nicer than necking. He seemed to think that that would be easy, for he blithely concluded: "Dear old Mrs. Grundy, patroness of unregenerated Puritanism, is dead. Youth wishes to bury her. Let us join with them and inter her with rejoicing."

The young folk who then looked forward eagerly to some brightening of the gloom of the churches were, of course, bitterly disappointed. There is no Bell school in the Episcopalian or any other church. Still, while the thunder of a horrible war rumbles on the horizon, those who claim to be our most enlightened and most courageous moral guides are absorbed in the grim scrutiny of bathing-beauty competitions and the chastity-girdles of Hollywood stars, the covers of our magazines and the freedom of our novelists. Yet Dr. Bell stated one of the great solvable problems of our time when he pointed out that our young folk, if not folk of all ages, stand squarely on their feet and ask "Why," and that no one answers them. You, they say to us, condemn murder, cruelty, dishonesty, and injustice, and we understand you. But when you turn from crime to what you call our vices you do not merely condemn; you pour the dregs of the dictionary on us. Our conduct is obscene, filthy, swinish, loathsome, bestial, sub-human. Your fine nostrils quiver with the stench of it. Yet just where you are most violent in your language you seem to be feeblest in your principles. Does it never occur to you that if this law of yours has no sound basis it is the most cruel tyranny that was ever imposed on hundreds of millions of people? You break into language of the most exquisite indignation when you see, you say, 50 million or 150 million folk bowed down under a political tyranny. To stop this you are prepared, dearly as you love peace and brotherhood, to support the vilest orgy of cruelty and destruction that ever fouled the imagination of man, the killing of 100,000,000 men, women and children in a few hours or leaving them to writhe out their lives in agony. Yet this law of yours only escapes the reproach of being an even more galling and comprehensive tyranny, more deeply blighting the lives of

even more millions, because, as has recently been definitely established, half of them evade it even when they profess to respect it. So it has been for more than a thousand years, and one doubts if even the ledgers in the ante-rooms of heaven have a record of all the suffering, hypocrisy, and deceit it has caused.

Therefore, many of us today ask the same simple question as our teeners, Why? The note of interrogation, someone has said, is the monomark of our age; and another wit has said that its armorial bearings are "a note of interrogation rampant over three bishops dormant." But questions never yet hurt a truth. It is the hand that closes mouths which prolongs the reign of lies and injustice. And it is useless to pretend that in this case your ideal of its very nature needs to be veiled from scrutiny, or that all good men and women are agreed on it. A professor of ethics once used this argument from the agreement of all good men; but it transpired that by good men he meant those who agreed with him. Many writers of the highest character challenge the law. Think of all the evils that survived for ages from the lack of such challenge. Slavery flourished from the dawn of history to the American Civil War. Duelling lasted almost as long. The subjection of women was almost unchallenged for 14 centuries, and royalty and parasitic aristocracy are not yet abolished. War—now the greatest evil in human life—and a steep inequality in the distribution of wealth seem not to be within recognizable distance of their end. The challenger is the pioneer of progress. The un-American is the man in whom lives most vitally the spirit in which this state was founded.

There is all the more need for a candid discussion of this matter because few even of our modern experts on sex frankly confront this most important aspect of it. Dr. Victor Robinson's valuable Encyclopedia Sexualis has no article on chastity or purity. All our encyclopedias discourse on the subject without even noticing the "Why?" that is on the lips of millions. The Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics, to which chiefly we should look for an answer, has an article of great length and learning on chastity, from which we learn the sexual antics of all the savages on earth and the ideas of all the old civilizations and religions but not a suggestion of an answer to our question. Ellen Key, admired or abhorred by half the world as the great rebel, says that chastity is "harmony between body and soul in relation to lust," and Bertrand Russell and other masters say much the same. Krafft Ebing says that religion rendered a profound service to the race by insisting on a law of chastity. The modern generation does not find in any of these an answer to its legitimate question, so I propose to examine the origin, development and historical operation of the law in the hope of finding an adequate and clear answer.

1. THE PROFANE ORIGIN OF THE LAW

Through the heavy emphasis which moralists of all schools have laid on the sex-clause of the decalogue and the emotional language with which they chastize transgressions of it—as if they were conscious of the intellectual feebleness of their position—it has come to be identified with the whole code of behavior. When an act is described as "immoral" most folk think at once of sexual conduct. This, we shall see, is or was originally entirely natural on the part of the religious moralist, for one of the chief roots of his ideal is that sex is peculiarly unclean in itself. The natural or rationalistic moralist has been driven to borrow his emotional language because when, in the last century, the rational evidences for religion began to waver, the theologians loudly protested that the sacrifice of religion meant an abandonment of the moral code, and their critics, the Spencers and Huxleys, retorted that even the law of chastity could be maintained in a naturalistic code of behavior. But the thoughtful person of any school or sect at once perceived that while the stern prohibition of violence or injustice, and even the milder condemnation of lying, petty theft, and dishonorable conduct, have a social significance, the traditional code of sexual behavior has, at least in large part, no such implication. Therefore we may here easily concentrate on this particular clause of the decalogue.

Since the word has different meanings in popular use, let us be clear from the start in what sense we take it. As it is generally understood, the law of chastity means that children before the age of puberty—the reason why I include these will appear presently—must not be "indecent" in behavior or language: that between puberty and marriage both males and females shall abstain entirely from sexual indulgence or acts or language that stimulate the sexual impulse; that married folk shall confine themselves to their mutual commerce; and that all shall abstain from any other form of sexual indulgence than this normal conjugal intercourse. The law, thus stated, is still so important a part of our general culture and is so heavily emphasized, even after a hundred years of fierce challenge of tradition, that the proverbial visitor from another planet would imagine that the answer to the rebellious "Why?" would leap to the lips of at least professional moralists.

Instead of finding this he would learn that we now have a science of ethics and its professors offer him four different answers, the supporters of each having a profound disdain of the other theories. First and most widespread is the theological answer: the gods, in modern language Christ, made the law. I have had occasion to read the New Testament repeatedly in English, Latin and Greek and do not agree with Dr. Bell; and surely Paul, with his fierce puritanism, has some title to be considered by Christians. But since the majority of folk in the leading nations of our time are no longer Christians, and, as we shall see, this conception of the law has been monumentally ineffective during the thousand years in which it reigned unchallenged, we ignore it here. Certainly it does not answer the modern "Why?" Nor does the second, the philosophic theory. When the philosophers claimed that they no longer heard divine commands yet had to sustain a law of chastity or become pariahs in civilized society they fell back on Demos's simple belief in conscience and made it more impressive by calling it moral intuition. The word intuition literally means "seeing," but we were supposed to have an eye of the mind as well as of the body: to have a "moral sense" as

well as the seven physical senses. I have shown so often that this is a medieval superstition that has been blown away like thistle-down by modern psychology, the authoritative study of our mind or of the mechanism of our behavior, that I will not bore my readers by returning to the point. But note, in passing, that the great majority of our lay moralists and their rationalistic followers still rely on this theory. A few of them have perceived the weakness and have offered us an esthetic basis for the law of chastity. A man has as much right to choose to admire a type of behavior in a man or woman as to choose a type of music or sculpture. But he cannot turn with moral indignation on those who differ from him; and, in fact, his language is borrowed from the theological world with its (originally) diabolical theory of the origin of sex. Here, assuredly, there is no answer to the insurgent cry of youth or to any serious inquirer.

The fourth theory is social. Probably most professors of the science of ethics would agree that the only sound basis for a moral code is the welfare of the social group. The great French jurist Montesquieu is honored as the man who, just 200 years ago, founded democracy and our modern political idealism by insisting, in his "Spirit of the Laws," that laws are far more likely to be observed if the people, consulting their own corporate interests, had, through representatives, the chief voice in making them. This social theory of moral law—it ought now to be called social law—ought to bring just the same improvement in social behavior as the theory of Montesquieu and the Encyclopedists brought about when it came to be applied in the reform and observance of civil and criminal law. And there are now few who seriously doubt that it fully explains and invalidates every clause of the moral code except the sexual or what the moralist calls "the self-regarding virtues." Here is the vital need for a plain answer. Yet when our professors of ethics, sociology, and even sexology come to this clause most of them become evasive or incoherent and take refuge in the luminous clouds of philosophical verbiage.

A short cut to the solution would be to take each line of the code of chastity and show that transgression of it has no serious social significance, while, on the other hand, a consistent application of this puritan code to our collective life would rob it of half the warmth and pleasure in which we find relief from the horrors and threats with which our statesmen burden it. I shall do this in the second half of my work, but it is advisable first to see how the ideal of chastity developed in pre-historic times and in the ancient civilizations, and how it worked during the 14 centuries or so in which it was a chief part of the code of the ruling powers.

The first part of this task is not easy. In theory, when we want to trace the growth of some idea or institution during the half-million years of man's portentously slow prehistoric evolution, we have only to study the ideas and institutions of what we call "savages." These *are* prehistoric men. They migrated to the ends of the earth from the main centers of development at various periods during the last quarter of a million years—earlier types are extinct—and ought to show us what the ideas and culture of the race were at the time of their migration. The fact that since then lower peoples have often borrowed ideas from higher neighbors and that during the last 200 years white settlers, travelers, and missionaries have deeply modified their old customs, makes it difficult, but the chief defect of literature in which the ways of savages are quoted to illustrate earlier stages of our culture is that, as a quite general rule, no attempt is made to discriminate between higher and lower uncivilized peoples. Instead, therefore, of getting the successive stages of the evolution of man's ideas in —as nearly as we can get it—the order in which they arose, we get a chaotic collection of "savage customs." Classical examples are Professor Westermarck's standard works—I once had the courage to tell him this but the learned Finn had only a feeble sense of humor— "History of Human Marriage" and "Origin and Development of Moral

 Westermarck *

Ideas," Sidney Hartland's long and learned essay on chastity in the Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics, Crawley's "Mystic Rose," Fehlinger's "Sexual Life among Primitive Peoples," many of the works of Mr. Havelock Ellis, and other important works on my present subject. An author gets a theory of the origin of morals, marriage, or religion, and he searches the confused mass of quotations about the ways of savages for material that supports it.

There is one academic work, "The Material Culture and Social Institutions of the Simpler Peoples" (1915), by three distinguished British sociologists—Professors Hobhouse, Wheeler and Ginsburg—that avoids this confusion and arranges the "simpler" peoples—a much better word than savage (which they rarely are)—in their true order, but unfortunately the professors seem to regard the code or pattern of sexual behavior as one of the least important aspects of their life. It does settle one or two points of value, as I will tell later, and in all my attempts to trace prehistoric developments (religion, morals, etc.) I have worked on those lines.

In the light of their main division of uncivilized peoples, corresponding to four consecutive phases of human development—Lower Hunters, Higher Hunters, Pastoralists, and Agriculturists—I may make one or two useful generalizations before going into detail; though I have no intention of loading these few chapters with quotations. The first is that among the Lower and most of the Higher Hunters there was little restriction of sexual conduct before marriage; which means that such restriction, by parents or the tribe, was not usual in the human family (above the primitive level, as we shall see) until the pastoral stage, which began less than 20,000 years ago. The second generalization is that still for thousands of years the restriction was not moral in the modern sense or religious but economic. We shall see later certain modifications of these general statements, but it broadly follows that during nine-tenths of the quarter-million years of human life which savages illustrate for us, their moral code, if we may speak of such a thing, did not include a chastity-clause.

This is confirmed by the attitude of savage parents to the sexual behavior of their children. Westermarck quotes the chief authorities agreeing that, as a general rule, they put no restraint whatever on their nude children, but quite commonly encourage them. Sir Harry Johnston, for instance, says that in Central Africa "scarcely any girl remains a virgin after about five years of age." I knew Johnston. He was an exceptionally conscientious writer, and, as he was during 20 years a high British official in various parts of Central Africa, he was exceptionally well-informed. Westermarck quotes authorities on different peoples making just the same remark and says that it is the usual situation. I have here nothing to do with the physiological aspect of it, and I quote it only because it shows a complete absence of feeling (except amusement) about sex when there is no question of childbirth; in other words, no sense of chastity.

Havelock Ellis, Crawford, and other authorities trace the chastity-ideal in part to primitive man's wondering repugnance at the disorders to which woman is subject. Consideration of this does not apply, of course, to what I have said about the sexual play of undeveloped children but, when we reflect how persistently peoples—the Hebrews, for instance—speak of the "uncleanness" of woman at such stages and the "contamination" of the objects with which she comes into contact, the idea clearly needs careful attention. Even in such lowly peoples as the Eskimo and certain Siberian tribes the man who would choose the profession of shaman or priest has, sometimes for years, to keep away from women. Commonly she is, particularly at her monthly disturbance or after child-birth, excluded from the temple or shrine or most jealously prevented from touching any of the paraphernalia of religion.

The Old Testament, as we have it, was not compiled before 500 B. C., and a good part of it is borrowed from the Babylonians, but the almost savage discrimination against

woman in Leviticus (chapters XII and XV) points rather to the pre-civilized life and ideas of the people. She has to undergo a rigorous purification after child-birth, and if the child is just another female the purification must last 80 days instead of 40 and she must make a "sin-offering." In the 15th chapter, which comprehensively deals with "uncleanness" (running sores, etc.) normal conjugal intercourse is treated as unclean (v. 18), and "they shall both bathe themselves in water and be unclean until the even." This at first sight seems to be a pre-civilized Semitic practice. The Semitic peoples despised woman, though the Babylonian Semites had learned juster sentiments from the earlier Sumerians and gave the woman equality with the man. But there is a curious passage in the Greek historian Herodotus (I. 198) which it recalls:

> "When a man has had commerce with his wife they sit before a censer burning incense, and as soon as it is light they wash themselves, as they must not touch any domestic vessel until they do this."

When Herodotus tells us an absurd and impossible story about Babylonian women having to sacrifice their virginity in the temple his words are welcomed as proof of the depravity of the Babylonians. When he gives us this evidence of remarkable delicacy in regard to sex his words are ignored. He is not entirely reliable in regard to Babylon, which he did not visit, but there is here so near an agreement with the Hebrew writer (of about the same date) that it points to some custom of the time in the Semitic world. But the discrimination against woman for uncleanness, which often extends to the man's intercourse with her, is found in many parts of the savage world as well as among the Jews, Moslem, and Chinese today. A primitive superstition, you may say, as it is a plain suggestion of the action of evil spirits, and one leading to profound injustice to woman. It reminds us of the saying of the early Christian philosopher Boetius that a beautiful woman is "a temple built over a sewer." But do you know that in the Catholic world of Boston and New York today a mother who has just borne a child must, on her first attendance at church, wait at the door until the priest "purifies" her; and I presume that Jewish mothers generally still do 40 days penance for bearing a man-child and 80 days for the shame of bringing another female into the world.

I would not say that this proneness of prehistoric man, as shown by the world-wide spread of the attitude, led to the beginning of a restrictive law. The powerful sexual impulse of the male would override any such repugnance. It seems rather that this repugnance was effective only, or mainly, in warding off woman's uncleanness from the altars, the sacrifices, and the temples until it was reinforced by another, a stronger sentiment; the belief that sex-life was a creation of the devil. The feeling of uncleanness then helps to put into the language of the moralist the peculiarly acrid note he uses about vice. "Unclean" is simply the Anglo-Saxon for the Latin "impure."

But the main root of the law of chastity is economic: the jealousness with which a father guards his daughter against a seduction that would lower her price in the marriage-market and the husband defends his property—his w i f e—against encroachment. The complaint that this is a horribly materialistic caricature of one of the most fragrant of virtues is naive. Practically all the experts who have taken the trouble to ascertain what in point of fact was the origin of our ideas are agreed on it. "Our sexual morality," said Havelock Ellis, "is in reality a bastard, born of the union of property-morality with primitive ascetic-morality . . . The economic element has given it a kind of stability." "The sense of ownership," said Hartland, "is the seed-plot of jealousy" and the main motive of laws against adultery and seduction. It is in many cases the motive of child-marriages, the prohibition of the re-marriage of widows, even (as in India) the burning of widows. Marriage by capture was practiced among some peoples—in a "sprinkling of cases,"

Hobhouse says. Even among the Eskimo, until they were civilized, it is said to have been common for a man to select a girl and drag her by the hair from her father's igloo to his own. But marriage by purchase, by payment or gift to the father or relatives, has been from an early age the usual custom; and with it chiefly begins the prohibition of intercourse before marriage and the husband's zeal to prevent adultery.

There was at one time a widely-received theory that the first social condition in respect of sex was promiscuity and that marriage was slowly developed out of this. Such theories were due, as I said, to the failure to arrange savage tribes in a scientific scheme. It is much the same with the theory that the old men taught the young men to be chaste (or continent) by the use of the cudgel, because they themselves wanted to monopolize the young women; though this is the case among the Australian aboriginals where, strengthened by the strict respect for tradition that they instil into women and the young, they make this claim to the first enjoyment of the adolescent *lubra*. Today our authorities generally agree that, as I have always contended, the earliest of our prehistoric ancestors were monogamous. When we reflect that this is the pairing arrangement of the highest of our animal ancestors, the orang and the chimpanzee, and of the lowest known fragments of the human race, we see the force of this theory. The family group long preceded the social group. When the young reached maturity they wandered away, found mates, and established another family-group. Their lives were simple from custom, like that of the higher apes today. "They do not recognize virtue but do not practice vice," as Professor Haddon says of the lowest peoples. They have little to quarrel about, as they have no property—they are not even hunters—and no "vice," as the groups consist of two adults and a few immature children. In time the families live near to each other, the temptation to poach arises, and the law "Thou shalt not covet" is slowly evolved.

Writers on the subject are agreed that a law against adultery—that is to say, that the community resents this grave disturbance of its peace and either punishes it or authorizes the injured husband to do so—is practically universal above the lowest savage level, but they contradict each other in regard to the license of the unmarried. Not only do travelers or even residents among the lower peoples make contradictory statements about them, but unless you pay attention to the cultural level of the people you can prove any theory you like by just selecting quotations from the confused mass of descriptions of savage ways. Fortunately Hobhouse and his colleagues apply their more scientific method to this point, and the result is interesting. Of the 123 simpler peoples they study 67 grant complete license to the adolescent and 56 condemn them to "chastity"; that is to say, they punish seducers of unmarried daughters and the girls themselves for the above economic reason. But the further analysis is particularly interesting. Among the hunters—the more primitive peoples—there are relatively few that forbid this free association. Strictness begins among the pastoral and agricultural peoples; whose life in effect began less than 20,000 years ago. This strongly confirms what I have said. There is no virtue of chastity, but in this class the social groups are much larger and connected by better transport and tribal organization, and the economic life is richer. Then the percentage of strict peoples falls off again in the higher stages of barbarism; which we may take to indicate a weakening of the tyranny of custom and a development of individualism.

We have, of course, to allow again for contact with whites in the last two centuries. They begin at once to seduce, bribe, or buy the native girls. But this does not alter the general truth: until near the dawn of civilization sex-relations are governed by economic considerations or jealousy not by ethics. There is no "virtue" of chastity. And the same economic motive generally explains variations from the main pattern. Where women are relative-

ly scarce in proportion to men we get polyandry and an increase of homosexual practices; though the latter are, largely on account of the restrictions, found everywhere. Where the women are in larger proportion and a section of the community gets more property than the majority we have polygamy or harems. The possession of the property by the male, in conjunction with his generally superior robustness and military training, also helps to explain the growth of a dual standard: freedom for the male, heavy restriction for the woman. Incest does not interest us here, and I will say only that economic considerations seem to have no application to it. There is a strong repugnance to it, arising in the higher peoples to a fierce hostility, at all levels. Bloch is wrong in saying that it is "widely diffused" in the savage world. It is formally recognized only in the case of royal marriages in a few cases (Egypt, Peru, etc.). Herodotus says that the early Persians often married their mothers but we do not trust him here. The almost universal avoidance of it in earlier times is generally explained by a theory that those who have grown up together do not stimulate each other sexually. This is hardly adequate, and it still needs a scientific explanation.

2. IT BECOMES A VIRTUE

What we call virtue, or fidelity to a moral law, develops out of a savage custom as insensibly as the colored petals of a flower have developed from the common green leaves of the plant. The very word "moral" indicates its origin as surely as the hair on a man's arm betrays his simian ancestry. It is the Roman word *mores*, which means simply customs or actual patterns of behavior, not a law of behavior. The ape-man of half a million or more years ago continued automatically to live in the cave or the forest as his ape-ancestors had lived in the trees of the Tertiary period. The simplest peoples (Negritoes) we know, now for the most part extinct or submerged by cross-breeding but fully described early in the last century, had scarcely advanced beyond this. In the last quarter of a million years, with the increase in size of social groups, a slowly advancing complexity of life, and tribal organization under chiefs and priests man's sexual behavior passed through the stages I have described. The family survived, mainly because of the man's impulse for exclusive possession of a woman, the wife and daughter became property to be guarded against encroachment or reduction in value by the loss of chastity; and for the sake of peace the communal authorities placed a ban on such encroachment, as they do in regard to any other kind of property. In a few cases they ascribe this ban to their gods.

It is a question of words whether we shall describe this restrictive law as "moral." But the attitude of the savage or barbarian to it is just the same as our respect for the civil law and has not the least tinge of mysticism; apart from the savage's vague shrinking from "woman's physical uncleanness" and from incest, if we can call this mysticism. You may have noticed how the bangles on the arm of a mature girl —I have at all events seen this in the case of silver bracelets—are tarnished during the few days of her monthly disturbance. Many women drench themselves with perfume. In various ways (odor, etc.) the savage is more acutely aware of unpleasantness at these and other times in a woman's life, and among a large number of peoples she is carefully isolated from everything connected with worship, on the perfect correctness of which the priests insist that the welfare of the community and the individual mostly depends. Some go beyond this and demand cleanness (continence) in the priest before his initiation or sacrifice, sometimes for life.

Still, however, we are not on the plane of what is usually called the virtue of chastity. It is still, indirectly, an economic precaution. In

some cases, though nearly all these fall in the period of civilization, priests and priestesses are required to be celibate because they are understood to be married to the goddess or god; as nuns are urged to keep their vows today by the reminder that they are "spouses of Christ," and they often wear a wedding ring. The sacred virgins of Peru and Mexico, the castrated priests of Cybele and Astarte, and others were so conceived. The idea is sometimes so crude and confused that we find (on the African Gold Coast) "virgin" priestesses of intensely phallic gods who assist at periodical fiery orgies in honor of the god. Havelock Ellis and others say that these periodical orgies are natural in the savage world because the sex-impulses of the savage are normally feebler than ours. I cannot check that remarkable suggestion, but when Mr. Ellis says the same of the knights of the "Age of Chivalry" and the cowboys of the old West, he is leagues astray in regard to the knights, and cowboys have told me that he has been strangely misinformed in regard to their class.

We should hardly call the law moral in our sense of the word even when, in a few cases of the uncivilized population, a sort of divine sanction is claimed for the law by the priests. Especially where the gods are deified ancestors the priests and chiefs are apt to insist that the laws of social behavior are under their protection and they will punish the transgressor in this life or the next. Professor Westermarck has a special chapter on this subject, but he finds few cases in the savage world, and he reflects that not one of them is free from the suspicion that travelers or missionaries have introduced the idea. In two of his half-dozen cases, the Australian aboriginals and the Andaman Islanders, this is practically certain. But since the divine sanction does not in any of the cases he quotes extend to sexual prohibitions we need not linger over these.

It is, as I said, a question of words at what stage we begin to call the code of the savage a moral code; and for those of us who today regard all moral law as social law it is a matter of indifference. Night pales into day, and we do not waste our time over the question whether it was night or day at a particular hour. But it is interesting to note that the theory that man has some inner moral sense or intuition "telling" him which actions are good and which bad has no foundation whatever in the long pre-civilized life of the race, especially in regard to sex. The savage contemplates with amusement the sex-play of his children which the conscience of the moralist heavily condemns. In the majority of cases, we saw, he grants full license between puberty and marriage; and when he does place restrictions on the adolescent or on married members of the tribe it is for definite socio-economic reasons and not in obedience to some inner instinct or light. He has a strong sense of property, in some cases an irrational feeling of uncleanness, but he knows nothing of a law or virtue of chastity.

Nor can it be said that the mind of man had to evolve further before this moral faculty would become active, just as you cannot deny the kitten eyes because they are not yet opened, for even when he was far advanced in civilization he had in at least half the civilized lands no more esteem of chastity as such than the savage had, and in many countries he derided the idea. Of the three earliest civilizations the Sumerian (or Mesopotamian) is obscure in this respect; the Hindu had a fertility-goddess with the usual esteem, not of abstinence, but of sexual indulgence; the Egyptian, with its medley of gods and goddesses, was full of contradictions. Of the next five to appear the first, the Cretan, honored the fertility goddess as its only deity; the Chinese was based essentially on family life and recognized only social restrictions; the Syrian and Hittite had the most logical and sensual form of the cult of Mother Earth; the Babylonian (as distinct from the Sumerian) had the usual strong condemnation of adultery and rape and apparently (from the marriage-tablets) a rule—how far it was observed we have not the least idea—of continence for girls be-

tween puberty and marriage. Thus the ancient civilizations before the 6th century B.C. certainly had no esteem of chastity as such.

The ancient Egyptians are conventionally esteemed to have been religious, sober, and moral. I have shown elsewhere that this is one of the superficial judgments formed in the days when our knowledge of them was imperfect. The inscriptions on the earliest tombs have a strong moral tone, and their "bible," commonly called the Book of the Dead, represents each dead man having his heart symbolically weighed against a feather in the judgment hall of Osiris and pouring out a string of "protestations" of sinlessness which suggest a moral code like our own. We have also what we may call little moral treatises (The Maxims of Ptah-hotep, etc.) going back to about 2000 B.C. in which elderly middle-class laymen give moral counsels to the young. But we are not here concerned with social qualities (justice, generosity, etc.) and it is still not clear that there was any regard for chastity as such. The condemnation of adultery never has that implication. Professor Breasted, the chief American authority, says in his "History of Egypt" (p. 86) that even in the Old Kingdom there existed "widespread and gross immorality"; referring, of course, to sex-behavior. The rich had harems; the poor, he says, lived in conditions that inevitably led to promiscuity. The lively and sensuous peoples were as fond of stories as we are of our novels, and these deal lightly enough with adulterous adventures and enterprising ladies. The story of Joseph and Potiphar's wife in the Old Testament is one of these ancient Egyptian stories. Phallic emblems met the eye frequently; on royal carvings, over the door of a cottage, or even in the temples of the greater gods. The kings often married their sisters, after the example of the great gold Osiris; and, though this point is disputed among Egyptologists, there is good reason to think that when the lover calls his beloved "sister" in the poems and stories, he really means his sister.

If we thus find in what is called the "solemn" Old Kingdom no recognition of a virtue of chastity as such, since the prohibition of adultery cannot be so described, we are not likely to find it in the Middle Kingdom, especially in the sensual Golden Age (about 1450 B.C.) when foreign ideas were freely introduced and there was widespread skepticism. We have certain little "moral treatises" or compilations of counsels from the old to the young about their conduct which, as I said, some ascribe to the Old Kingdom or earlier than 2000 B.C.; and others to the Middle Kingdom. Best of them is "The Maxims of Ptah-hotep": a short essay on the lines of Ecclesiastes, embodying moral sentiments closely like ours today. But it is purely utilitarian in motive. The good life means that which pays the wise man best. The youth is warned against "consorting with women," but this obviously means harlots, for the writer goes on: "A thousand men have been ruined for the pleasure of a little time short as a dream, and even death is reached thereby." Later he says: "If thou make a woman to be ashamed . . . be kind to her for a space, send her not away, give her to eat." In short, the Greek historian Herodotus describes loose features of Egyptian life which he saw in the 5th century B.C. that must have been age-old customs of the country. Even in the temple-celebrations the chief festival of Osiris was phallic, since it turned on the discovery of the missing sex-organ of the god, but in popular festivities it must have been riotous. The women took about the streets and roads images of the god's phallus with heroic proportions, worked by a string, and we can imagine the roars of laughter and the shouts. On such festivals the Greek traveler describes the women—whole boatloads of them going to some temple—behaving, as they pass a rival village, in a way that no police in the world would permit today. Another Greek writer tells us that the Egyptian woman had the repute of being the most free in regard to sex of all women in the ancient civilization. Islam has checked their liberty—but assuredly not that of their men.

It is not necessary to say more than that we do not find in Sumeria or Babylonia any greater recognition of a specific virtue of chastity. Adultery is punishable with death in the Hammurabi Code (of about 2000 B.C.) and this seems to be an old Sumerian law that was not applied in Babylon. It does not, in any case, spring from a regard for chastity. Nor does the death penalty for rape. What are, apparently, stricter features are explained by the lingering of the old superstition about woman's uncleanness I have already quoted the not reliable statement of Herodotus about the behavior of married couples after legitimate intercourse. Similar is the law (clause 110) that a priestess who, even after retirement, takes a drink in a wineshop shall be burned alive, and the fact that in some of the lower orders the priestesses were not married. They were "wives" of the god Marduk. It is significant that these are, in the Code, of lower rank than the married priestesses. Thus while there are traces of the feeling, inherited from savage days, that on the religious side there is something contaminating about a woman's "uncleanness," which in some cases extends to sexual intercourse (as in Leviticus, XV), this second great civilization of the ancient world had certainly not that sentiment which impels the modern puritan to put every sexual act (of touch or vision), every thought and desire of a sexual nature, almost on the same level as adultery. But all this is comprehended in what has been called the virtue of chastity since the beginning of the Christian Era.

But the puritan is again entirely wrong when he believes that this stricter law, differing in principle and motive from the general condemnation of adultery and the frequent prohibition of pre-nuptial indulgence, began with the new religion. This new and radically different attitude to sex began to spread several centuries before the opening of the Christian Era and was widely accepted before it was lodged in the writings of the new religion. It led to what I have in earlier works described as the dramatic ethical conflict of the Sky Father and the Earth Mother. By whatever circumstance the priests of the Sky Father (the sun or the heavens) came in Egypt to drive into a subordinate position the priests or priestesses of the Earth Mother, she remained supreme in the other kingdoms of the ancient world: India, Crete, Syria, and the land of the Hittites (Asia Minor). Her priests might, as in Syria, have to deprive themselves of the organ of reproduction, but the general glorification of sex in the cult shows that this was not from an idea of asceticism. If that attitude was, as the Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics (article "Asceticism") says, "unknown among the old heathen Semites and Egyptians" we are not likely to find any trace of it among peoples which persisted in regarding fertility as the highest human good and the spirit or deity of fertility as the supreme object of worship.

The modern mind is apt to see more than symbolism in this association of a new sex-ethic, which lays so heavy an emphasis on cleanness and uncleanness (purity and impurity), with the gods of the shining sun and the bright blue sky, while the opposite attitude is connected with earth; but that is a fantastic play on words. And not less imaginary is the idea that the Aryans, having a Sky-God as their supreme deity, brought the new ethic with them and enforced it on the sensual older nations. Certainly a "Father in the Sky" (in heaven) was the chief deity of the Aryans before they divided and entered on their career of conquest from India to Italy. The Dyaus-pitar of the Aryan Hindus is clearly identical with the Zeus-piter of the Greek and the Jupiter (or Diu-piter) of the Roman: the Father (pater) in the shining heavens (Diu). But, as the Greek and Roman legends about his love-affairs remind us, he was far from being the divine patron of asceticism, and certainly the cult of this amorous adventurer did not conduce to forming an ascetic mood in regard to sex. While, therefore, the new idea first definitely confronts us in the sacred book of the Aryan Persians, the real origin of it is obscure.

In my book, "The History of Satanism," I gave all that is known about the new development and need not repeat it here. The idea that the gods created the world is found in many primitive religions but was especially elaborated by the Babylonians, from whom the Hebrews borrowed it. It is a childlike guess, not a profound speculation; and as man's intelligence developed it was challenged on the ground that the world is not worthy of such powerful and generous beings. The Babylonian priests met the challenge by explaining that both the earth and man were created good and without blemish, but the first men transgressed the commands of the gods, and the gods had cursed the earth and man. But the alternative suggestion might easily occur to a polytheist, some of whose gods were malignant, that a good god had created a beautiful world and a wicked god or near-god had come along and, with a magical power almost equal to that of the good creator, had turned the earth into a garden of thorns and thistles and man into a sinful and disease-ridden plaything of the elements. One Persian mystic learned in his navel-contemplating that the wicked god had created 99,999 diseases for the torture of men.

This is no more "profound" than the idea of creation, which all the Greek thinkers disdained, yet it does not seem likely to have occurred to any man in a pastoral nation such as Persia was before the 6th century B.C. There may have been among them some shrewd old man—some oracle of the drug-store as we should say now—named Zarathustra who was long remembered, but the sacred book of the Zoroastrians is, like the Old Testament, a collection of pieces of different dates, and the priests who put them together, probably after 500 B.C. when the Persian Empire stretched from Babylon and Egypt, may have invented a prophet as the Hebrew priests invented Moses. But for all that I refer to my previous book, "A History of Satanism" (Haldeman-Julius, 25c). Somewhere in the new Mesopotamian Civilization, in which the tyranny of old cults was melted down in a cosmopolitan culture this new idea, of a profound historical importance which few of our history-writers seem to perceive, came to birth. God created an immortal world without any of the limitations and contaminations which arise from what we call matter. He created a world of spirit. It was the nearly-almighty evil spirit that created matter. Naturally Judaism and its twin offspring, Christianity and Islam, could not grant such mighty power to an evil spirit, since this would raise it to the rank of a god. They fell back on the earlier theory that God himself cursed the world he had made. But the root of asceticism, particularly in regard to sex, was now planted in the soil.

As Barton says, the chief root of asceticism is the belief that the soul is holier and more important than the body. We do not find this among pre-civilized nations or even in civilization until this Persian-Babylonian, or so-called Zoroastrian, theory appeared. Culture was now, on account of Persian imperialism and the collapse of old religious authorities, cosmopolitan, and the theory spread; though, as usual in those days, the vast majority of folk either never heard of it or shrugged their shoulders at it. The Persians themselves, who are generally credited with the invention of the theory, were, in their new wealth and luxurious sensuality, the most flagrant violators of its moral implications, the most intense cultivators of the body and its pleasures, particularly those of sex, natural and perverse. In fact, the later Zoroastrian priests say in their bible, the Avesta: "The man who has a wife is far above him who begets no sons." The Babylonians, according to one of the officers of Alexander the Great who has left us his impressions of them in the 4th century B.C., became freer in sex-behavior than they had ever been before. The Jews maintained their general sensuality, though the new idea may have counted for something in the harsh doctrine of uncleanness in Leviticus, which was written about this time.

But in every age, especially in times of wealth and sensuality, there are men and women who, de-

spising or sincerely shrinking from the life of the majority, say that mind or soul or spirit is infinitely superior to the body, and that in order to protect and cultivate it you must despise bodily pleasure, the fumes of which obscure and taint it. Blended with the existing restrictions on sex—the severe prohibition of adultery and the lingering suspicion of uncleanness—this inspires a particular antagonism to sex and a praise of abstinence. Complete abstinence, which could not be urged in the matter of food, or celibacy became for the first time in civilized history the most decorative of mantles of virtue and an indication of superiority to the common herd. Everything that threatened it —indulgence of sight (of nude Greek statues, for instance, or erotic books), touch, embraces, etc. —fell under the ban of the law of chastity.

In isolated individuals or groups of simple-lifers such as we find in our own time this would not have amounted to an historic development. The idea reached Greece and, although it was presented by Plato in the finest prose ("Timaeus," etc.) that was ever written in the ancient world and was more or less embodied in the "mysteries," it was rejected by the Greek people and the great majority of their philosophers, who, being materialists, preferred realism to verbiage, moderation to fasting. Plato himself did not practice it. Aristotle highly appreciated the pleasures of the table and the bed. Even Zeno occasionally indulged in sex-pleasure, both normal and homosexual—this statement in the authentic biographer of the philosophers, Diogenes, is deliberately mistranslated by our modern puritans—in order to show that his Stoic philosophy was *not* ascetic. It was only in the 3rd century A.D., when Plato's glittering phrases got mixed up with oriental superstitions about spirits and devils, that any body of Greeks adopted it. With just a few exceptions the code of sex-conduct in the Greek moralists was the same as it had been in the older civilizations: young women before marriage were restrained, young men were not, and married men might enjoy daily association with the charming and well-educated Greek women from the colonies who were known as *hetaire* ("pals") and were doubtless not meticulously virginal.

The Greeks had obtained the idea from the Egyptians, and in Egypt, whether from Persian influence or not, the ascetic idea had had a remarkable development. The priests and priestesses of some of the gods, especially Isis and Serapis, were vowed to celibacy: though I may recall that even in Babylon 2,000 years earlier some classes of priestesses had been forbidden to marry. There was at all events a notable growth of asceticism and a cult of virginity in these late Egyptian religions, though this had no effect on the life of the mass of the people, and many of the Jews, who were now migrating to Egypt in large numbers, contracted the ideas.

But the Jews had had direct and intimate relations with the Persians ever since Cyrus had liberated them from the Babylonian Captivity, and the new ideas were more or less adopted (in theory) by the zealots or Pharisees. From this body in the course of time a number of ascetics detached themselves and formed the sect of the Essenes. The Jewish historian, Josephus, tells us that there were about 4,000 of them scattered over the cities of Judea about the time of Christ. In addition to voluntary poverty they abhorred sexual commerce and never married; and this, it has always seemed to me, connects them with Persia on the one hand—there were other points in common—and with the new religion on the other. It seems to me probable that Jesus was an Essenian who became convinced that the end of the world was near and, quitting the usual Essenian service to the sick and poor, began to exhort folk to shed their sins and prepare for the judgment of God. It was a familiar Persian teaching that the supreme God, Ahura Mazda, had proposed to allow the supreme devil to have his way only for a limited time and he would then destroy the world by fire, summon the souls of men to a general judgment, and consign the wicked and the devils who had tempted them to an eternal fire-pit.

Whether or no we believe that there was an historical prophet named Jesus, and whether or no he taught the Persian code of sex-restriction which was based on the belief that the devil had created the flesh, the Christian creed was pledged by Paul, its real author, to insist on the virtue of chastity in its widest range. There was no "sin" against which Paul thundered more heavily than transgression of the sex-clause of the new Decalogue, and it was not long before the ministers of the new religion were exhorted by their leading oracles, the Fathers of the Church, to avoid even marriage. Paul's disdainful concession that it was, perhaps, better to marry than to burn in hell forever led the church-leaders to use harsh language about it. One said that marriage was just "a decent sort of adultery." Even in the married state sex-pleasure stank in the nostrils of all of them. In fact, it was not so much sex-pleasure that they permitted to married folk as the right to provide new citizens for the state. Once a woman had rendered that service and became a widow the church ought, most of them said, to forbid her to marry again. Young women were urged to see that virginity was far more pleasing to God, and "sacred virgins" (whose morals most of the Fathers scourged) multiplied in all the churches. The heaviest censor of them was Jerome, yet he was the most zealous in persuading Roman girls to refuse marriage. In an extant letter to the virgin Eustochium, an 18-year-old girl of one of the noblest families of Rome, he uses such coarse language about even married love that no one would venture to translate it literally today. By this time (about 375) the legal prohibition of paganism and enforcement of Christianity had begun, and the world was now to have 15 centuries' experience of the Persian code in a commanding position in its religion, its law, and its literature.

3. FIFTEEN CENTURIES OF VIRTUE

We thus see that while civilization is some 5,500 or 6,000 years old the specific virtue of chastity did not appear until a little over 2,000 years ago. The prohibition of adultery and rape had always been understood as a social restraint on individual impulse. There now appeared a restrictive law which, it was pretended, had not a social but a mystic basis in the mind of the individual. It had never been forbidden to gaze with envy at a neighbor's possessions or to handle them, but even desire, language about sex, the sight of nudity, the touch of one's own body, without the least danger of encroaching on any other citizen's property, were violently condemned under the new code. The Greeks and Romans generally ignored it, and for several centuries respect for it was restricted to relatively small groups of Isisists, Essenes, Christians, and Manicheans. Its origin was unknown, so it was supposed to be dictated by "conscience," which we might trace to the Stoic idea of a "law of nature" speaking in a man's mind; though, as I said, the Stoics did not admit that a virtue of chastity was part of the message of "the still small voice."

The real origin we have seen. The old superstitious attitude to sex, particularly in woman, was now reinforced by a belief that either the devil had created it or it was at least no part of the original creation but a penal modification of it on account of sin. The instinctive repugnance of the race to such a theory was disarmed by the supplementary theory that, since intercourse was the only means of maintaining the population, it was permitted to those weaker or inferior members of the community who kept within the bounds of matrimony; and until the last part of the Dark Age this concession was further enlarged by Christian states recognizing divorce on five or six grounds, while even the clergy as a body successfully resisted the attempts of the zealots to forbid them to marry.

Was the new code of behavior an improvement on that of the earlier

civilizations? Most folk reply to that question according to their tastes and beliefs, but it is obvious that no answer is of any value that is not based on an adequate socio-historical inquiry into character in the Christian Era. But we may simplify the matter. A large part of our literature confronts us with a claim that the change of religion was of great value to European society mainly because of this insistence on a new code of sex-behavior. It was, of course, not new in the sense which most of these writers have in mind. It had been slowly spreading from Persia for three or four centuries, and in the first quarter of the first century of the Christian Era was, as I showed, accepted by Persian, Jewish, and Egyptian religions and here and there by pagan moralists of ascetic tastes but no religion. However, the main point is this: it was never *practically* accepted by the majority in any age, any more than, as has been recently shown, it is in America today.

In our age there has been a more strident note than ever in the cry of the apologists. From the latter part of the 19th century to the last few years the clergy bleated that the wicked morals of our modern paganism threatened to destroy both Christianity and civilization. Now the cry is that our Christian "moral and spiritual values"—it is piquant to find our press-men and politicians rolling off the pretty phrase—are in danger from Russia, so we must embark on a campaign which, the same folk tell us, may destroy civilization, to blast the life out of some tens of millions of folk who in practice seem to be the least sexy of modern nations. These people involve themselves in hopeless contradictions because there is no sincerity in their cry. They pretend that democracy and freedom are the chief of these Christian values, whereas democracy and freedom were buried by the new religion and were bloodily persecuted whenever they peeped out until the end of the 18th century, and in most places to the second half of the 19th. They are decidedly modern pagan values, and the most powerful of the churches—the Roman Catholic Church—is as hostile to them as ever.

However, we may, as I said, simplify the issue by replying that the only real difference between the ancient civilizations and that of the new Europe was that in those the ethereal code of Zarathustra, Pythagoras, and Plato was rejected both in theory and practice, while in the Christian Era it was accepted in theory and generally ignored in practice. It is 40 years since I first, in my "Bible in Europe," took up this claim that Christianity uplifted the average sex-morals in Europe and so laid one of the solid foundations of modern civilization. Since that time I must, even counting 20 or 30 Little Blue Books as part of one work, have written more than 50 works on the subject, which has always had a sort of fascination for me. Some of these are large works like "The True Story of the Roman Catholic Church" and "The History of Morals," which give exact references throughout to the original authorities (in Greek, Latin, German, Italian, French, Spanish and Portuguese) and to the leading historians. Yet I find myself almost a voice crying in the wilderness. Learned professors bring out one sumptuous book after another on the history of Europe, hardly ever referring (on social questions) to the original authorities or the great historians, and my conclusions seem eccentric in comparison with their eulogies of the piety and virtue, age by age, of the peoples of Europe, so that the newspaper and political talk about our Christian Civilization and its perils is absorbed as smoothly as fresh milk or aged, smooth bourbon.

So, instead of arguing once more here and heaping together ugly facts from the chronicles, I fancy that the best service I can do for the reader is to collect, with additions, the opinions of the more distinguished historians which I have quoted in earlier works or give the titles of such contemporary works in each age as may be available in English. I have recently published a work ("The Testament of Christian Civilization," London, 1946) in which I translate a long series of hitherto untranslated passages of medieval writers, but that book is not available to the American reader, and I therefore rely chiefly on

the words of masters of the history of the various periods and countries. They refer, as this book does, only to sex-conduct and are chosen as far as possible because they pass general verdicts. The fundamental fallacy of those writers on the other side who venture to give the reader facts is that they select isolated individuals or groups and pretend that they are typical of an age or a country.

Broadly speaking, and as we should expect, the first three generations of Christians, who still expected a speedy end of the world, were virtuous. We do not forget **Paul's indictment** of the Christians of Corinth for, he says, imitating the vices, even the unnatural vices, of the pagans and the letter of the Christians of Rome to those of Corinth in the year 96 sadly rebuking them for the vices they still cherish. A more important matter is that before the end of the 2nd century whatever primitive innocence we may admit in the first 100 years seems to have disappeared. In 1842 we found the Greek manuscript of a work by Bishop Hippolytus, the only scholar that the Roman community included in many centuries, and he gives us a scorching account of the laxity of the Popes and the state of the church. Pope Victor, it seems, was, in order to get favors or wealth, friendly with the most brazen concubine—to put it politely—of one of the most depraved of the emperors, Commodus. His successor was "a fool" and the next Pope, Cullistus, a wily and dishonest ex-slave, further corrupted the morals of the Roman Community by admitting ladies of wealth and rank but picturesque sex-morals, which the indignant bishop candidly describes. This is confirmed by Tertullian, the austere African Father; and a little later St. Cyprian gives us in his letters an even darker picture—a dark picture—of the morals of the clergy in his own region, Roman Africa. All these documents are available in English.

But we are not much interested in the days when, for the first 250 years, Christians were only about 1 in 50 of the population of the Roman Empire. I just note that the legend that they were, as a body, superior in morals to the pagans is put together, in the usual manner, by selecting isolated instances of high virtue and relying on a literature about saints and martyrs that is acknowledged by expert Catholic writers to be for the most part forgeries. The fact is that, as the 4th-century historian, Bishop Euzebius, tells us, with mordant irony, when the test of persecution came at the end of the 3rd century, there was an "almost universal apostasy." Bishop Eusebius borrows that phrase from the contemporary Bishop of Alexandria (in VI, 41 of his "Ecclesiastical History") but you notice that I modify the harsh language of these reverend fathers. In point of fact, modern research, Catholic and Protestant, has discovered that not more than 200 out of the 2,000,000 Christians of the time were martyrs. In other words, a tenth of 1 percent of these virtuous folk bore witness to their faith. The great majority expressly disowned it, sacrificed (or burned incense) at the pagan altar, and handed over their Bibles to be burned. And in the quarrels about "traitors" which followed when peace was restored it transpired, the Christian historian Optatus candidly tells us, that the morals of even many of the bishops were scandalous.

The legend that after the conversion of Constantine the Christian body "leavened" the pagan world and brought about an improvement in sex-morals is just as reckless a defiance of the facts, as stated by the contemporary Christian writers. Not only do experts on Roman life in the 4th century like Sir Samuel Dill ("Roman Society in the Last Century of the Western Empire," 1899) prove that the general character was good, but the entire Christian literature of the century testifies that the average Christian character was not. Take the three great cities, Rome, Carthage, and Antioch, and the three distinguished Christian leaders who lived in them and have left us descriptions of their character: Jerome, Augustine and Chrysostom. Jerome's letters accuse, in general and detail, the whole body of the Roman clergy, laity, monks, and sacred virgins of amazing corruption. He makes an

exception only for about 10 women and one or two men who were his pupils. Chrysostom says in a sermon delivered about the same time (385) to his flock at Antioch that of the whole 100,000 Christians of Antioch he doubts if 100 will be saved, so vicious is their sex-behavior. They will, he complains, not come to church when he is going to preach on chastity. They are, he says, worse than the pagans in general morals: far worse than the men of Sodom in their particular line of vice. And Augustine's sermons after he became bishop tell the same story of the Christians of Africa. But it will be enough to quote a work in which a priest of Marseilles expressly inquires, in the second quarter of the 5th century, whether the new Christian world is more virtuous, particularly in regard to sex-conduct, than its pagan predecessors, and he emphatically denies this. H. C. Lea gives this correct summary of Salvianus's book ("On the Government of God") in his "History of Sacerdotal Celibacy" (p. 58):

> "Nothing can be conceived more utterly licentious and depraved than the whole framework of society as described by him . . . unbridled lust and unblushing indecency admitted no sanctity in the marriage tie . . . The poor aped the corruption of the rich, and hideous depravity reigned supreme and invited the vengeance of heaven . . . Rome was the sewer of the nations, the center of abomination of the world, where vice openly wore its most repulsive form and wickedness reigned unrebuked and supreme."

History repeats itself. This strict French priest calls Rome "a sewer" in the first half of the 5th century; and we shall find another strict French priest, Lamennais, calling it a "sewer" just 1,400 years later. Salvianus did not travel in the east, and from the account of pious pilgrimages you may infer that Christian virtue at least flourished in Palestine. Read the letters of St. Gregory of Nyssa (about the year 382). Jerusalem, we learn, was more vicious than Rome or Constantinople.

Your religious friend may say, after consulting his pastor, who in 999 out of 1,000 cases knows no more about these matters than he does, that I forget or, more probably, deliberately conceal the fact that the Teutonic barbarians now overran Europe. Who were the worst of these invaders? The Vandals live in our literature as such. Who is the highest authority on the Vandals? The Quaker historian Hodgkin in his "Italy and Her Invaders," and he says (II. 214):

> "They were conspicuous even among the chaste Teutonic warriors for their chastity; both in Spain and Africa their moral standard was and for some time continued to be far above that of the uncleanly-living Roman provincials (who were now Christians).

Another quotation is amusing. The pagan phallic festival of the Lupercalia, held on February 15th, in which almost nude young men ran about the streets of Rome striking willing matrons on the belly, had been maintained for nearly two centuries after the conversion of Constantine. Pope Gealasius, about the year 495, decided to abolish it, and the whole people, headed by some of the Senators, stormed his palace and shouted that further calamities would fall on the city if he interfered with this ancient rite. We have his reply, in which he recounts their misfortunes and asks:

> "Did the Lupercalia do this or was it our morals—thefts, homicides, adulteries, injustices, iniquities, ambitions, cupidities, perjuries, oppressions of the poor, attacks on good causes, defence of the wicked, an unheard of perversity in all things—even hypocrisy, sacrilege and magical arts that were repugnant even to the pagans?"

The famous historian of the city of Rome in the Middle Ages, Gregorovius, at this point describes the sinking of Rome into the Dark Ages. The people were, he says (at the opening of his second volume), "a mass of moral degradation."

Some of the ingenious history-writers of our time, who are so clever in correcting the greater his-

torians of the last generation, protest that the destruction of the Roman civilization was not nearly so complete as it used to be said. Gaul (France) in particular had its culture spread over vast areas. Remarkable. It was first crossed by the wave of the Vandals, then by the nation of the Western Goths, and then by the even less civilized Franks. However, we have a well-known and exhaustive history of the country in the 6th century by Bishop Gregory of Tours. It can be read, decently touched up here and there, in a translation, but I prefer to refer the reader to the accurate summary of it which we find in Professor Leddy's famous "History of European Morals" (II, 99-102). "The picture which Gregory of Tours gives us," he says, "is of a society which was almost absolutely anarchical . . . all classes seem to have been equally tainted with vice." He quotes Hallam, whose "View of the Middle Ages" is (like Lecky's book) far too flattering to the church, saying that the record merely convinces us of "the extreme wickedness of almost every person concerned" and Dean Milman ("History of Latin Christianity" I, 365) saying that "it is difficult to conceive a more dark and odious state of society." Gibbon was correct when he said that "it would be difficult to find anywhere more vice and less virtue" than in this France of the 6th century; in which, according to some of our recent histories, the clean robustness of the savage, the best culture of the Romans, and the fragrance of Christian piety and virtue were at last happily blended.

I must leave out of account here the Greek or Byzantine world, merely observing that even Professor Lecky, one of those gentle Rationalist writers, who, as George Eliot said, "admit that two and two make four but beg us not to press such matters too far," calls it "one of the least noble forms that civilization has yet assumed." Its one "great" monarch, as he is described, Justinian, married (after a spell of free association) the most brazen and corrupt young actress, for years the toy of grooms and charioteers of the Circus.

But since Europe has, at the time we have reached, passed into the Dark Age, no informed student will ask us to look for virtue in it except in isolated cases. Such witnesses as there are to general character in the 7th and 8th centuries tell much the same story as Gregory of Tours. Chief of them is Boniface, Archbishop of Metz in the 8th century, equally familiar with England, France, and Germany, and equally scalding about the vices of all three. No one would dare to translate his letters today. But his description of the prevailing license, both in adultery and sodomy, in the age of Charles Martel, a ferocious and completely unrestrained ruffian who is mentioned in our modern histories only as the great champion who saved Christian Civilization from the terrible Bolsheviks of the time (the Spanish Arabs), refers particularly to monks, nuns and the clergy and I reserve it for the next chapter.

Then came Charlemagne and the "Carolingian Renaissance." It is a joke. For centuries there was a tradition in France that the foot as a measurement of length was taken from the penis of Charlemagne. He married five times and had at least a score of bastards and an unknown number of mistresses; and his daughters were as gay as he, and his palace an Abode of Love. Historians now admit that, apart from his morals, his constructive work has been greatly exaggerated and that in any case it fell into the grossest disorder after his death. All documents of the time show that France became again as vicious as in the days of Boniface. Charlemagne died in 814 and Europe sank so low that 40 years later the legend spread everywhere that an English girl, Joan, became Pope; and in point of fact the Papal Court from 870 onward passed into a state of almost continuous foulness for nearly 200 years. The American historians—I mean professors of history—who have recently discovered that there never was a Dark Age in Europe are careful not to state, if they know, that it was not Rationalist historians of the last century (as they hint) but "the Father of Catholic History," Cardinal Baronius, who had discovered

that there was. In his famous "Annales" he opens his account of the 10th century with the words:

> "A century which in its coarseness and sterility in all good might be called the Iron Age, in the hideousness and volume of its evil the Leaden Age: while from its literary poverty it is usually called the Dark Age."

The Papacy of the time he calls "the Rule of the Whores" (in the coarsest language), for Popes were elected and directed by a group of brazen and illiterate women, the cream of the Roman "nobility" of that time, who were in some cases the lovers or the mothers of the popes. For a full account see my "True Story of the Roman Catholic Church" (vol. IV), which gives the contemporary authorities at every step.

In 1929 Professors Sellery and Krey published a work, "Medieval Foundations of Western Civilization," with a preface by Dean Ford, of the University of Minnesota. The Dean says:

> "There was a time when a goodly part of the period covered by this volume was called the Dark Ages . . . Happily the clouds have cleared from the pages of modern writers, and we see now the worst of the centuries between Romulus Augustus and Richelieu." (475-1630).

Of course, no historian ever did call this long period the Dark Age, which means only from about 500 to 1050 or 1100. This is part of the trick. But the most amusing feature of this "new history," which is somehow peculiar to American professors who can't read medieval literature—can it possibly be connected with the great power of the Catholic Church in America over education-authorities and the reviewing and circulation of books?—is that it makes the Dark Age bright by discovering two Renaissances: the Carolingian, which we have seen, and the Othonian. The short cultural splash of Otto II and Otto III (a half-Greek and half-crazy boy) falls just in the middle of this foulest period of European history (or in 973 to 1000)! Listen to the verdict of the most authoritative of all histories of the Middle Ages, the Cambridge Medieval History, the fifth volume which opens with this general characterization:

> "The early part of the 11th, as well as the 10th century, is often and rightly called a Dark Age for the Western Church. Everywhere we find corruption and general abuses . . . the whole of Roman society was corrupt . . . Many of the worst and unmentionable evils (sodomy and bestiality) belonged more to society at large than to the Church alone."

And compare the verdict of Dean Milman:

> "The obscenity which perpetually occurs in the pages of Bishop Liutprand betoken an age of profound corruption. The Italian character was now a strange fusion of lust and ferocity. The emasculation of enemies was a common revenge."

This refers precisely to the reign of the three Ottos!

If you want to know what authority these American professors can quote for their "new history"—they never quote the medieval writers themselves or recognized modern experts—I should suggest that they find their excuse in the amazing historical articles in the Catholic Encyclopedia and in a large history of the medieval popes by a British Catholic priest, Mgr. Mann, who was generously decorated by Rome for proving that black is white but is completely ignored in general history. However, we have now reached the end of the Dark Age, the second half of the 11th century, and the apologetic professors breathe more easily in the purer air. Doesn't Pope Gregory VII now impose celibacy on the clergy, monogamous marriage on the laity, reform of life on the whole of Europe? Do we not now see the Age of Chivalry (1100-1400) open, the glorious cathedrals rise, a magnificent art and an extensive literature appear, the great Schoolmen, the new monks, an entirely new civilization? Yes, of course. That is why those writers falsely represent that the British

historians (and Draper) make the Dark Age cover this period. This makes it easier to laugh at them. As I have repeatedly shown, most recently in my "Epic of Universal History" (1948), the normal and belated economic recovery and the influence of the great Arab civilization in Spain and Sicily necessarily brought about this brighter aspect of the European life. But in regard to that aspect which alone concerns us in this book, sex-behavior, there is only one change—from Savagery in Buckram to Savagery in Silk. We pass into one of the freest—if not the freest—periods of sex-behavior in the whole of civilized history.

Professor Westermarck, author of the standard "Origin and Development of Moral Ideas," says (II, 432):

> "The gross and open immorality of the Middle Ages indicates how little the idea of sexual purity entered into the manners and opinions of the people . . . Unchastity was regarded as an object of ridicule . . ."

If this seems an exaggeration take the verdict of Dr. Ludwig Pastor, the most learned Catholic historian of our time, on the 15th century, the culminating period of this grand medieval advance. He opens his lengthy history of the medieval popes with an analysis of the literature of the age. Speaking of one of the best and most popular poets Beccadelli, he says (I. 24):

> "The horrible crimes which had been the curse of the ancient world and which were the theme of his elegant verses raged like a pestilence in his time in the larger towns of Italy, especially among the higher classes of society."

Pastor follows the clerical convention when he says that sodomy had been prevalent in the ancient world —we have no evidence about the extent of it—but at least the pagan Roman world did not see, and would not have tolerated, its finest writers openly praising it and claiming freedom for "the two Venuses," to use the Renaissance expression. But in the 15th century it was not only Beccadelli but Lorenzo Valla (the chief historian), Piccelomini (later the "great" Pope Pius II), Aretino and Filelfo (the best poets) and Poggio Baccolini (a papal secretary) —the leading writers of Italy—who claimed this freedom. And that this reflects an extraordinary license throughout Italy is emphatically stated by Dr. Pastor in the opening of his fifth volume:

> . "Of all the evils which darken Italian life at this period the deadliest was the prevailing immorality . . . it increased to a terrible extent during the age of the Renaissance . . . especially among the cultivated classes revolting excesses were common. With a few honorable exceptions almost all the Italian princes of the period were steeped in vice. Aenaeas Sylvius (Pius II) said: 'Most of the rulers of Italy at the present day (about 1460) were born out of wedlock.'"

Pastor admits that "cruelty and vindictiveness went hand in hand with immorality," as I have shown elsewhere, but we are here concerned only with sex-morals, and I know no historian who is an authority on any country in that period who does not agree. Pastor, who is not a preacher rebuking vice but an apologist for his church, can protest only that (by diligent search) he finds a few dozen men, now completely obscure, who observed the Church code.

It was the period that is known as the Age of Chivalry. I at one time made considerable search into it and wrote a book on it but British publishers shudderingly returned the manuscript. In various American works I have explained that the myth was invented by two sycophants of the French nobility in the 17th century, and that there is not a single recognized authority who does not describe the period as exceptionally, indeed brutally, unrestrained as regards sex. Even at the time the most sober and learned of British writers, Bishop John of Salisbury, who knew the knights and princes of both Britain and France well in the 12th century and devotes a whole book (VI) to mili

tary matters in his Polycraticus, says of the knights:

> "I am ashamed to say how ignominious they are. While our armed men, our 'glorious' soldiers, more and more assail the chastity of others and prostitute their own, lounge about the houses and at the banquets of the rich . . ."

Yet in face of this assurance by the highest contemporary authority our new history-writers repeat the old lie that the knights directed their lives to the championship of virtue and justice. They can quote no real authority, of that time or our time. Even Catholic experts have acknowledged the truth. Saints-Palaye, leading French authority of the 17th century, says, after many compliments, in his "Memoirs on Ancient Chivalry" (II. 19):

> "Never were morals more corrupt than in the time of our knights, never was the reign of debauch more universal."

Dr. Lingard, the second-best (after Acton) British Catholic historian, says that "these Christian knights gloried in barbarities which would have disgraced their pagan forefathers." The distinguished French Protestant historian Guizot says in his "History of Civilization" (Bohn translation, III, 114):

> "The epoch which occupies us is without doubt, one of the most brutal, one of the rawest, in our history; one of those in which we meet with the greatest amount of crime and violence."

Professor Luchaire, leading French authority on the 13th and 14th centuries, fully justifies Guizot's words: "Almost everywhere," he says in his "Social Life in the Time of Philip August" (English translation: 1912), "the castellan (local lord) was a brutal and pillaging soldier" and "in the majority of cases the lady of the manor was . . . a virago of violent temperament and strong passions." The Hon. H. D. Fisher, one of the chief authorities in English on the knights of Germany, says that "the thickest strand of their existence was woven of cruelty and vice" ("The Medieval Empire," I, 342). The other chief authority Professor Thompson ("Feudal Germany") and Giesebrecht, the leading German historian, agree. For the atrocious conduct of the Norman knights who brought "civilization" to England see the contemporary Norman monk-historian Ordericus Vitalis or any authoritative history of England; and Freeman in his "Norman Conquest" shows that except in regard to sodomy, on which the Norman nobility were experts, the Anglo-Saxons were just as free in morals when the Normans came.

I could fill many pages with such quotations. "Everywhere," says the Cambridge Medieval History (V. 593), "the barons perpetrated the same excesses." Lecky says in his "History of European Morals" (II, 346):

> "In one respect a great retrogression resulted from chivalry and long survived its decay. The character of the seducer, especially of the passionless seducer, who pursues his career simply as a sport . . . has been glorified and idealized in the popular literature of Christendom in a manner to which we can find no parallel in antiquity."

Every authority on this literature (Gautier, Boissy d'Annglade, Meray, Krabbes, etc.) agrees. You will find a good deal of it quoted in Dr. Briffault's work "The Mothers" (1927, vol. III). All say, as Luchaire does, that "modesty and delicacy were yet unknown." Matrons and maids alike were fiercely aggressive. "The blood boils in their veins," says the Catholic, and leading authority, Gautier. For Germany, Professor Weinhold says in his "German Women in the Middle Ages" (pp. 180,400, etc.):

> "They give their love by preference to the cunning, the coarse, and the brutal, and many offer their love for money . . . Conjugal fidelity became a joke and lusty adultery and frivolous vice were praised in countless short poems . . . the utmost coarseness and immorality . . ."

The chief British authority, J. F. Rowbotham, says in "The Troubadours and the Courts of Love" (1895, p. 106):

> "Immorality, was fostered as

it has rarely been before or since by this exceeding freedom of intercourse."

Professor Medley says in Traill's "Social England," I, 556:

"The gallantry which we are accustomed to associate with the feudal age was only skin-deep, and the brutality of husbands to wives and of men to women quite disabuses us of our notions of medieval chivalry."

Knights errant! He says that if a knight met an unprotected maid in the roads in those days he would rape her. No: there would be no need for violence. Experts admit that the young women fought their mothers for the men. And let me ironically crown this selection of quotations from expert authorities on the period with one from a leading British scientist, a Rationalist of the school that frown on my work as darkly as the clergy do. In a special lecture on "Education in World Ethics and Science," Sir Richard Gregory, the Rationalist scientist, who in 1948 wrote with indignation to the press because the British Association had not opened its meetings with a church service, blandly says:

"In the age of chivalry of the 11th to the 14th centuries, duty to noble service gave refinement to the character of the warrior. Love, honor, loyalty, and piety were esteemed as major virtues, and courtesy, courage, obedience, and respect for women as minor."

I doubt if he could have drawn up a better list of the qualities which, on the testimony of all experts, the knights of the Age of Chivalry most conspicuously lacked.

As the papacy itself passed into one of its long periods of corruption —at the end of this period, the role of Vicar of Christ being played by a series of men who, when they were not themselves rovers or paederasts, at least refused to check the deep corruption of Rome and their court —it seems hardly necessary to prolong this series of quotations; especially as I have to expose the situation from another angle—the morals of the clergy, monks and nuns —in the next chapter. To any man who imagines that the Reformation altered sex-behavior in at least one half of Europe I recommend the 200 pages of quotations from contemporary Protestant writers and preachers in the last volume of Jansen's "History of the German People." This theory is as mythical as the theory that there was a Catholic or Counter-Reformation. What the general level of sex-behavior remained until recent times in Italy, Spain, Portugal, and France is, I imagine, too notorious to need describing. In England the Reformation was followed by the boisterous freedom of the Elizabethan age, and it was mainly the eagerness of the nation to return to this freedom that made it sacrifice the republican liberty it had won in the Civil War and set up the genial throne of Charles II; and if the Puritan religion was maintained in Scotland it led, as Buckle shows in his "History of Civilization," to a lamentable amount of seduction and sodomy. In short the general level of sex-behavior in the early years of the 19th century, in America as well as Europe, which was just a lingering of medieval conditions in the modern world, makes a mockery of the idea that the ancient pagan world and the new pagan world of our time deserve heavy condemnation and that between the two lie 14 centuries of Christian virtues. I give the facts in several works ("The True History of the Roman Catholic Church," "History of Morals," etc.). I show here that my estimate of the facts is the same as that of the great majority of the experts on the various periods. And I affirm that the majority of those recent writers on the history of Europe who support the cry of the preacher and the politician, that religion gave us moral and spiritual values that form the indispensable basis of our civilization, have betrayed the honorable standards of the sciences of sociology and history.

4. THE PROFESSIONAL VIRGINS

Wnen, 55 years ago, I bade goodby to my Catholic neighbors and went off to become a little shavenpated monkling, my heroism was much admired. "You will have a front seat in heaven," they said, "but for us it will be enough just to squeeze through the gates." Since I was not then sexually mature, which did not occur until I was 26, I did not feel the full weight of the sacrifice, but the experience has a serious point. Even Paul, the theologians say, did not demand that all Christians should remain virginal. It was "better to marry than burn," he said, somewhat disdainfully. Virginity or complete chastity was a counsel for the elect, not a law for the crowd. So from the general body of the faithful the elect were gradually segregated. The one consistent note about sex in all the early church-leaders is that it is "unclean," so as soon as the theory of the Mass was developed, the demand for the celibacy of the clergy arose, though it was not until a thousand years later that the zealots could pass and enforce a law of celibacy on the whole of the clergy in the western church, the eastern still refusing to forbid marriage. But a sort of feminist movement, protesting that this high privilege ought not to be reserved for men, appeared in the 2nd century, and young women ("sacred virgins") and widows began to take the vow of chastity. In the 3rd century a third type of professors of sterility, the monks, appeared.

It may occur to some who have read the preceding chapter that perhaps at least these heroes and heroines of virtue observed the law which the church-leaders derived from, ultimately, the Persian superstition that sex was devil-created, so I have preserved them for special treatment. Ordinary historical literature, encyclopedia-articles, manuals, etc.) used to disarm the critic by generously admitting that now and again, here and there, irregularities crept into the monastic world. The new history, which proceeds on the principle that ugly facts need not be mentioned except in the case of radical rebels against law and order, does not make even these slender concessions. You gather that there were no monks before St. Benedict (about 600 A.D.), and that from that time onward a monastery was an estate carved out of the shaggy wilderness to which pure men retired from the violence of the world, lived a life which is idyllically described in a chapter with the title "A Day in a Monastery," and gently spread the spirit and aroma of civilization over the region. And I will now show, using the same method of quoting exact authorities, that this again is a monstrous betrayal of the responsibility of the historian. In most ages, until modern times, these institutions and the clergy have been corrupt for the most part, and even in our time are frequently corrupt under their disguise of superior virtue.

It is hardly worth while lingering over the scattered Christian communities of the first three centuries. I showed in the last chapter that from the latter part of the 2nd century onward even the bishops shared the increasing laxity of the general body. In the 4th century, when the Christian body expands rapidly under the shower of imperial gold, heavy and general censures of these professional virgins begin to multiply; and the increase is in remarkable proportion to the general increase in wealth of the Christian body. A synod at Carthage in 348 orders the sacred virgins to live apart from the common herd and threatens with excommunication the men who consort with them. Emperor Jovian in 364 had to threaten with death the men who marry them. In 374 the Council of Valence imposes severer penances

on the virgins who marry, and 10 years later Pope Siricius (Migno XIII, 1137) makes a sweeping attack on monks and nuns who form clandestine connections until children appear. From this point onward such denunciations by popes, bishops, and councils are so numerous to the time of the Reformation that they would fill a large volume. Lea quotes hundreds in his "History of Sacerdotal Celibacy." I prefer to take larger testimonials which he has missed.

Most authoritative, yet the most sweeping and scathing, are the letters of St. Jerome, who was for years the secretary of Pope "St." Damasus in Rome; though Jerome does not tell us that Damasus himself was nicknamed "the Tickler of Matrons' Ears" and was saved only by the intervention of the emperor from a trial for adultery in the civil court. What he does say is a comprehensive indictment of the priests, monks, sacred virgins, and widows of the Roman Community (about the year 370) as corrupt. Commenting on the monks (only recently introduced) he says that the emperors have had to declare legacies to them invalid, and "I deplore only that they deserve it," he says, while his opinion of the priests is such that he forbids his most aristocratic pupil, a girl of 18, ever to remain alone in a room with one of them. "Plead some necessity of the bowels or the bladder to leave the room," he elegantly advises her. "Beware," he says again, "of the kind of men you see in chains, with long hair like women and beards like goats." He means the monks. They "find their way into the houses of the rich and deceive little women who are loaded with sin." Others "become deacons and priests only in order to approach women with more license." They detest chastity and fasting, and they "gorge until they vomit." They "enjoy all the pleasure of matrimony except the name." As to the sacred virgins "it is painful to tell how many virgins fall every day." "Beware of nuns," he warns; and beware of widows who pass as "chaste as nuns, and then after a dubious supper they sleep with the apostles." We have a dozen long letters of Jerome on these lines. They do not warn his tender pupils that there are some corrupt priests, monks, and nuns about. They indict the whole large bunch of them in Rome.

I showed in the previous chapter that the Christian communities in the other cities had not a higher moral level than at Rome and that this level fell still lower in the 5th century. Here, just before and at the time of the fall of Rome, St. Augustine is the chief witness. He has left us a book on "The Work of the Monks," the chief idea of which is that they do not do any work but ought to do for the sake of their morals. Jerome describes them wallowing in the good things of the great city. Augustine describes them wandering over the country from town to town, selling bogus relics of saints and martyrs. There were then (about the year 400) no "orders" or "rules" and few monasteries. It was just a new hobo profession that the credulous piety of rich women had created. Augustine gives no figures; of course, but he paints a picture of idlers, ex-slaves, peasants, etc., everywhere donning the recognized dress of the monk and living a rich wandering life by begging. In other letters he tells how bishops and priests share what he describes as the wholesale corruption of the African Church.

So false is the account of monastic life that is now usually given —that Benedict first conceived, about the year 500, the grand idea of retiring from the darkening world (instead of helping the Ostrogoths to restore it)—that this picture which Augustine paints in the year 400 of vast numbers of wandering monk-hypocrites is expressly repeated by Benedict himself, for his own time, nearly 100 years later. By this time there were large monasteries, especially in the East, but, whether the monks were chaste or not, they figure in crowds in the great theological controversies of the time, like gangs at a modern race-course. When an archbishop wanted to prove at a conference in Ephesus or Alexandria that Mary was a virgin or Christ had really two natures he sent word to the nearest large monastery, and a crowd of hundreds of

shaggy, unwashed monks rushed to the city with cudgels. However, as Benedict shows, the swarms of hypocritical roving monks, picking up good meals and beds and other necessaries of life as they wandered, continued all through the 5th century. And they completely ignored the few monasteries that Benedict founded to "tame the wilderness" and "preserve the classics"—no chaste monk would read a line of the Latin classics—and still wandered all over Europe. For St. Isidore of Spain describes them in that country in the 7th century ("On Ecclesiastical Offices," 11, 16) in exactly the same language as Augustine and Benedict. In fact, Pope Gregory I deplores the laxity of monks in the Benedictine monasteries themselves.

Not in England and Ireland, the apologist expostulates. It is true that after their conversion in the 5th century the English and Irish priests and monks had a spell of religious fervor. What exactly it amounted to we do not know, for all statements about it are taken from early medieval lives of saints which are as trustworthy as lives of modern monarchs or statesmen. But one thing is clear—and I have a personal interest in the matter, for McCabe (or Macab) is just the Irish for Son of the Abbot—and it is that priests and monks in Ireland were not forbidden to marry. So I hold that my abbot ancestor of those remote days was, though not perhaps virginal, most probably a respectable married man in an unchaste world. It is said of one of these Irish Kings that he personally deflowered every maid in his kingdom. Those, remember, were the days of miracles.

As to England the monks and nuns soon became the gayest in Europe. In the 8th century there was a British monk-historian, Bede, who gives us a fragrant account of the state of religion in his day. The assurance of this purblind cloistered abbot is lovingly reproduced in modern histories, which do not add that in an extant letter to King Egbert Bede confesses that there are lots of disorderly nuns, while the testimony of a far more reliable contemporary witness, St. Boniface, is never noticed. Boniface, the most famous missionary-traveler of the century, was equally familiar with the state of monasteries and nunneries in England, France, Germany and Italy, and he describes them and the clergy as amazingly corrupt. His letters are the most valuable historical document of the 8th century and are fairly well translated in the Columbia series, though I follow the blunter Latin original. In a letter (LXII) to King Ethelbald he complains that he keeps mistresses instead of a wife "and commits this shameful crime mainly with nuns and virgins consecrated to God in their convents." He goes on to say that "the English people, as is said in that country and in France and Italy, despise lawful marriage and live filthily like the people of Sodom." When, he says again, "these whores, whether nuns or lay women, have conceived in sin, they for the most part kill their offspring." Two other British Kings —the country was then divided into several Anglo-Saxon Kingdoms— are equally guilty, he says of "adultery with nuns and breaking into convents . . . vice and fornication with sacred virgins in their convents." In another letter (LXIII) he presses the Archbishop of Canterbury to forbid the nuns to make pilgrimages to Rome, because it is "so foul that few of them return unsullied." Considering the appalling difficulties and dangers of travel in those days you will be surprised to read that "there are few cities in Lombardy and France in which you will not find English whores or adulterous women."

Such was the real state of Bede's England and Italy, France and Germany were, Boniface explains in other letters, just as bad. Lea gives 10 pages of evidence on the state of "clerical celibacy" in France in the 8th century, more for the 9th, and calls the 10th "the most repulsive in the Christian annals." Boniface's 49th letter is to the Pope on the state in which he found France, and he learned that it had been in that condition for 100 years; in other words, had so continued from the time of Gregory of Tours. "For the most part the episcopal sees in the cities have been given to greedy lay-

men or the revenues of them have been assigned to adulterous and fornicating clerics." They say that they have been to Rome and seen how licentious it is, and "the Pope has given them permission to hold the episcopal office." Substitute "sold" for given and this is probable enough. Naturally the taint goes down from the archbishops or bishops through all the clerical orders. There are priests and deacons "who have four or five or more concubines in their beds at night." Let us remind the reader that in those pious days beds for eight or more sleepers were common. The church councils in England, France and Germany and the chronicles in Italy fully support the statements of Boniface.

Charlemagne, the monarch of the long phallus and the palatial abode of love, was not likely to alter this state of things, and the church-councils in all countries continued to talk, mildly enough, about adulterous bishops, priests and nunneries that are "brothels." The 9th and 10th centuries were so foul that quotations would be endless. Apologists protest that St. Dunstan reformed the clergy and the monks of England. The story of his work—he deliberately used bogus miracles and even, it seems, sometimes ventriloquism—is pitiful and amusing. King Edgar, aged 15 or 16, played into his hands by leaving the table with a notorious whore at his coronation-banquet, which was too much even for the strong stomach of the English. Yet with the royal troops at his disposal Dunstan (Mansi, vol. XVIII) reformed only 47 out of the hundreds of Benedictine abbeys, and they relapsed or were regained by armed forces of the gayer monks. The priests still commonly had "wives" and left the office at death to a son. We find the Archbishop of Canterbury meekly pointing out to them about the year 1000 that this is naughty. "We cannot force you to be chaste," he says, "but we admonish you." Then the Danes overran England and the demoralization was worse; and when, in 1066, the Normans brought in a higher civilization—a prominent feature of which was general sodomy—it was worse than ever.

Abbot William of Malmesbury, one of the few good prelates and decent writers of the time, gives us terrible pictures of the Anglo-Saxon and then of the Norman church. Before the Normans came "any priest who knew grammar was a portent and a miracle to the others," and the monks "made a mockery of their rule." What happened after 1066 is well known. The Conqueror and his leading nobles were appalling brutes. William seduced the daughter of a priest, and the queen had the girl hamstrung, and the King had his wife whipped to death. He and his leading nobles were ferociously cruel and completely unscrupulous. His brother, a bishop and the second most powerful person in England, was a monster of greed and cruelty, yet he "nearly bought the Papacy"; for which William stole his money and put him in prison. There were decades of sadism, and Norman bishops and abbots were as bad as the nobles in using torture. We read of the bishop of Ely entrusting the defense of his great castle against the king's troops to his virile mistress. We have the word of Pope Pashal II that "the larger, if not the better, part of the priests in England are sons of priests" (about the year 1100). We read in the Archdeacon of Huntingdon's contemporary "History of the English" (Migne, vol. 195), how the Pope sent a Cardinal to reform the English priests, and how after a solemn speech in council about the enormity of a priest rising from the side of a whore to go and say Mass, he was himself "caught with a whore in the evening." We have the assurance of the Archdeacon of St. David's, Giraldus, that when a lady told the Bishop of Lincoln that her husband was impotent, he laughed and said: "We'll make a priest of him and he'll soon be potent." We have one of the soundest of the writers of the time, Bishop John of Salisbury (Migne, vol. 199 p. 360), telling a French archbishop that it was "the Archdevil (archbishop) of York" who egged the King against Thomas a' Beckett, Archbishop of Canterbury, and that the real reason was that Beckett had exposed his right reverend brother for cutting out the eyes of a youth with whom he had

or wanted to have sodomitic relations, and that York went to Rome and got absolution by the usual bribery. Cardinal Baronius, the Father of Catholic History, accepts this in his "Annals" and quotes from a contemporary saintly man, Peter of Blois:

> "This pest and innumerable other evils infect the Church today . . . The monasteries are turned into camps and markets. The monks play the part of wolves."

We have John of Salisbury writing to the Pope, who has sent him and two bishops to inquire into the abbot elect (actually functioning) in the great Abbey of Canterbury, that "this stallion, neighing after fillies" —I must, out of respect for the modern police, refuse to translate the next phrase which this holy bishop writes to the Holy Father—"debauched mothers and daughters alike" and has 17 bastards in one village alone. We have the Abbot Benedict assuring us that the abbess and nuns in the chief convent of nearby Faversham have had to be cleared out because the convent was just a brothel . . .

I need not talk about France, Germany and Italy, where still cruder things happened, and a candidate for the bishopric was officially asked at Rome whether he was addicted to sodomy or bestiality. But you will notice that in pursuing this calendar of virtue in England I have crossed the line of the Dark Age . . . I beg the pardon of our American professors. Only ignorant men now talk about a "Dark Age." But we have, at all events, got beyond their "great reform of the Church by Pope Gregory VII" and the reform of the Benedictine monasteries by Bernard of Clairvaux: the events which so occupy our historians that they overlook the little matters I have narrated. Let us see.

Gregory VII completed his imposition (by means of violence) of celibacy on the clergy and died in exile—angrily driven from Rome by the Romans—in 1085. Bernard founded his Cistercian reform in France about 1100; in 1120 Abelard, the most brilliant master in Europe, was castrated by order of Canon Fulbert of Paris for seducing his niece Heloise. They were married before the birth of their child, but Abelard decided to enter the famous Abbey of St. Denis and ordered her to enter the equally famous royal nunnery at Argenteuil. The fiery little Heloise confesses, rather boasts, in one of her love-letters to him that before his mutilation and after she had taken the veil they enjoyed their conjugal rights in dark corners of the convent-chapel; which does not greatly distress her as the nunnery was the usual sort of brothel for nobles. A few years later a papal bull speaks of "the enormity of life of the nuns who are established there." Abelard (in his first letter) found life in the great abbey also "worldly and shameful" and he "often rebuked the abbot for his filthiness." The monks angrily got him removed and made prior of a monastery in Brittany. Here he found all the monks "married" and with families—40 years after Gregory VII's abolition of clerical marriage—and when he expostulated they put poison in the wine he used in Mass. In writing my life of Abelard I went further into this matter and found that in point of fact the majority of the houses of both monks and nuns were corrupt. In a sermon which Abelard preached later to Heloise's nuns—she was actually an abbess when she wrote the famous Love Letters—he calmly says: "Few nuns observe the difficult law of carnal continence." In 1107 the bishop had closed another Benedictine nunnery, close to the palace in Paris, which had long been just a brothel for the nobles. Almost the same time St. Ivo, Bishop of Chartres, closed a nunnery on the ground that it was "just a brothel of diabolical women." Cardinal Jacques de Vitry, a contemporary monk, says in his "History of the West" that apart from his own Cistercian Order (which had few convents) there were no nunneries in France fit for a decent woman.

He says that the morals of the clergy and monks were just as bad, and there is plenty of confirmation. In his fourth letter Abelard says that "almost all of the monasteries of our time are corrupt." Dubois' clerical "History of the Church of

Paris" says that "the condition of the Church at that time was unhappy and wretched . . . lust and shameful pleasure were openly rampant." For the provincial cities of France we have an amazing record in the autobiography of a strict abbot of that time, Guibert of Nogent, which is included (suitably modified) in the Broadway Translations. If any author now put the story of the events that occurred under his eyes in and around the cathedral of Laon in the first quarter of the 12th century in the form of an historical novel of the "Forever Amber" type, every publisher would be outraged at the suggestion of printing it, and any person who read it in manuscript would warn the author that he ought not to allow his imagination to conceive such fantastic and incredibly coarse happenings in the clerical world of the Middle Ages. The Pope himself visited Laon in the thick of these events, and all that happened was that he and his cardinals left the city with heavier pockets. Pope, king, bishops, great scholars like Anselm of Laon, nobles, countesses, etc., are all in this tapestry of events that occurred in the chief religious center of France, at the height of the Age of Chivalry and less than a generation after the "great reform of the church."

And equally ugly and incredible things were happening in the clerical world all over France. The condition of France and England, as described by the contemporary monk-historian Ordericus Vitalis, who knew both countries well, is as bad as the condition of Frankland described by Gregory of Tours six centuries earlier, which moralists consider the lowest depth of degradation. Of the general condition of France and England at this time he says (curtailing his long dirge):

> "Arson, plunder, and murder were every day events . . . An insolent lubricity spread with such immunity that sodomitic Venus infested the effeminate and damnable people . . . Towns of adulterers were established, and in these the sons of bandits were raised like the whelps of beasts . . ."

Cardinal Jacques de Vitry is as dark in his "History of the West":

> "Monstrosities and prodigious abominations grew and involved the entire world. All were filled with vomit and filth . . . Those who renounced the world and devoted themselves to religion fell away, and the higher their position the lower they fell. The chief cause of all these evils was the corruption, vices and ignorance of the prelates . . . The clergy are worse than the common people . . . You see whores on every side dragging clerics through the streets to their brothels, and if they will not enter the women shriek 'Sodomite' . . . The nuns had nearly everywhere become so corrupt that good women could not go to their houses or those of canonesses."

Both historians fill their pages with amazing particular experiences to justify these general characterizations. I have added many others, from clerical documents of the time. The standard history of France Lavisse's "Histoire," which takes rank with the Cambridge History, says (IV, 319):

> "It seems that owing to circumstances the number of evil prelates was then far greater than that of good prelates."

But all that you read about the period in the history of the Middle Ages as it is now written is that these French, Normans, and English were the most generous church-builders in history, that the soaring piety of the age was just beginning to express itself in the Gothic cathedrals, that the Church was covering Europe with a network of schools, and so on. Germany and Italy were just as bad as France and England, and in Palestine even the religious orders of knights, which sought to restore the real crusading spirit in the corrupted mass, were rapidly degenerating, to be presently exposed as the rich sodomist colonies of the Templars.

We have now, remember, in our survey of this era of virtue left the Dark Age behind and are approaching what Catholic literature now hails as "the beautiful 13th century," the period of the greatest of the Popes, Innocent III; also the

century of the Massacre of the Albigensians, of the Inquisition, of the appalling Sicilian Vespers, of the savage feud of the Guelfs and Ghibellines, of such tortures by the Italian dictators as are not equalled except in Chinese history, of the sack of Christian Constantinople and extraordinary profanation of its cathedral by Christian knights, of the wildest celebrations of the indecent Feast of Fools in the churches and cathedrals of France, of the rule of Pope Boniface IX, who said that intercourse was as harmless as washing one's hands, and so on. In other words, it would be ridiculous to seek a reform of clerical and monkish morals in the 13th century. As to good nuns, we read this ironic advice to young men in a manual ("On Love") written by Andrew, chaplain to the stern Pope Innocent III:

> "So be careful, Walter, to avoid solitary places with a nun . . . for if she thinks the place suitable for lascivious enjoyment she will not hesitate to give you what you want."

A British Positivist (therefore pro-Catholic) historian, Cotter Morrison, makes a special study of the 13th century in his "Service of Man" and concludes that it was "an age of violence, fraud and impurity, such as can hardly be conceived now." The chronicles, the letters of the popes (especially Innocent III), and the records of councils everywhere tell the same story. So sordid was the monastic world that two new orders, the Franciscan and the Dominican, were founded, and were corrupt within one generation. Luke Wadding, the official historian of the Franciscan Order, admits this, and Albert the Great admits it for his own Dominican Order.

Even a Catholic would not look for improvement in the 14th and 15th centuries, and I need not linger. Hallam, in his "View of the Middle Ages," quotes an eminent theologian of the 14th century, Clemangis, asking: "What else in our time are the monasteries of women but shameful brothels of Venus?" (IH 303). The Papacy, now transferred from Rome to Avignon, where Petrarch (who lived near) describes its amazing corruption, entered on a new period of demoralization which lasted, with a few short periods of improvement, for nearly 350 years. What would you expect in the ordinary clergy and monks? Especially when the Hundred Years War between France and England led, as long wars do, to further degradation and considerably lowered the morale of the two countries. It is more interesting to consider whether, as all historians of the last century said and the new history denies, the corruption of the clergy and monks was not one of the chief causes of the Reformation. Aenaes Sylvius (later Pope Pius II) tells us in his "Commentary on the Acts of the Council of Basle" (p. 57) that at that Council, in the 15th century, a venerable German bishop appealed to the church to abolish celibacy as the only way to save it. He said:

> "Scarcely one priest in every thousand would be found to be chaste; all live in adultery or concubinage or worse (incest or sodomy.)"

One of the few good Popes of the 16th century, when the revolt had begun, Pius V, said in a letter to the monks of Germany in 1567 (quoted in Lea):

> "The chief cause of the evil is the corrupt morals of the prelates who, giving the same license, to the clergy under them and corrupting them by their example, not undeservedly brought on themselves the greatest hatred, contempt and anger of the laity."

So said bishop after bishop at the Council of Trent, when at length they forced the reluctant representatives of the Pope to face the question of reform of morals. But, of course, the new history knows better. This cry of clerical and monastic corruption is, they say, a loud exaggeration of "a few irregularities that had crept in." The real motives of the Protestant revolt were political social, psychological, geological, botanical, or something or other.

The Cambridge Modern History opens at the Reformation and, with the usual academic urbanity it in-

vited a Catholic priest, Dr. Barry, to contribute a chapter. In such high company Barry, who was an elegant priest but no historian, has to drop the usual tricks. He admits that at the time of the Reformation the church showed "a worldliness which has never been surpassed." Worldliness in Catholic priests is what the theologian calls sin or corruption in Protestants. He admits that this was especially "among the higher clergy and in religious associations" (orders of monks and nuns). He says that there was a corruption so wide as in the opinion of many to justify revolt from Pope and Bishops. He quotes the Bishop of Winchester, one of the most important in England at the time, saying that "everything belonging to the primitive integrity of the clergy, and especially to the monastic state, was perverted"; and, I have shown that the Archbishop of Canterbury said the same.

But, ignoring this authoritative work, the new historians rely, as far as England is concerned, on Cardinal Gasquet's Henry VIII and the English Monasteries. Gasquet was a British monk of the last generation who was a great pet of the Vatican. It made him, as a reward, Perfect of the Vatican Archives. His book was to show that, in his own words:

> "Anything like general immorality was altogether unknown among the religious of England. This much is clearly proved by the testimony of the acts of episcopal institutions."

A far better historian than Gasquet, Dr. G. G. Coulton, of Cambridge University, the most learned authority in the world on medieval life, took up the matter and challenged Gasquet to quote one single such episcopal declaration. When he could ignore the challenge no longer Gasquet dodged and twisted —"too busy," etc.—but never produced one. In a series of pamphlets ("Sectarian History," "The Gasquet Scandal," etc.) Coulton roundly denounced him and all the other British Catholic apologists who supported him (Thurston, Belloc, etc.) as liars. He quotes Newman saying, when he had been a few years in the Church and was invited to write for it: "Unless one doctored all one's facts one should (would) be thought a bad Catholic." The greater Catholic historian, Lord Acton, said worse.

These priests attacked, with their usual bluster, Lea's "Sacerdotal Celibacy," in which there is a mountain of evidence of the corruption of the priests and monks at the time of the Reformation. Coulton showed that they had not proved any error in a single one of Lea's "5,000 facts." And Lea had not all the facts. In my "True History of the Roman Catholic Church" I give a few pages of evidence as regards the priests and friars of London from Archdeacon Hale's "Series of Precedents and Proceedings in Criminal Cases" (1847): a selection of cases from the record of the episcopal court of London, the chief of those sources to which Gasquet had dishonestly referred. What was likely to be the general condition of London in the first quarter of the 16th century when friars had their own brothels, and a priest (probably drunk) could turn round to the people during his Mass and shout "Lick my arse." And London was then no larger than a town of 25,000 folk is in America today, so that everybody knew everything. I have told from official clerical records that a few miles out of London was a great Benedictine abbey, St. Alban's, with subsidiary houses, which was a colony of disorderly houses for the monks and visiting clergy, and a few miles out on the second main road north a large nunnery which was a brothel for civilians.

The Counter-Reformation in Catholic lands is as mythical as the purity of the clergy. The latest documents (unfortunately always left in Latin or Italian) with which L. von Ranke closes his standard History of the Popes show Rome still in the foulest condition after the middle of the 17th century. Rodoncanachi shows in his "Courtisanes et Buffons" (1894) that the choicest prostitutes of Europe continued at Rome making—almost entirely out of the higher clergy—fortunes up to $100,000 a year. Bishop Ricci of Pistoria shows in his

"Memoirs" (English translation, 1829) that the Dominican monks and the nunneries they controlled still lived in the grossest profligacy in the 18th century. Some of the details he gives are surpassed only by the account of the life of the monks and priests of South America in the (untranslated) "Noticias sacretas de America" (1826) by two Spanish scientists. For Spain and Portugal the evidence is abundant. And, while we all thought that monks were more prudent in America, Britain, and Germany today, the appalling exposure in Catholic courts of the monks of Germany and their universal addiction to sodomy in 1936-8 (see my "Vice in German Monasteries,") warns us that a respectable facade may conceal anything.

I have always doubted whether there is much sexual disorder (beyond masturbation, which is common) in modern nunneries, and the recent work of Miss Helen Conray ("Forgotten Women"), an ex-nun, tells the same story as Miss Cusack ("The Nun of Kenmare") and various other ex-nuns I have met. It is the general morbidity of life—the chronic irritation, quarrelling, etc. —that betrays the pernicious influence of the vow of chastity. The sweet or demure face of the nun you meet in the street is one of the profitable lies of Catholic propaganda. The life is miserable for the majority, and it is a scandal that young girls are permitted and even persuaded to take up this career. They are free to leave, the Catholics say. Yes, until the vows are made "solemn" in later years and with a great deal of fuss and appeals to Rome. But the girl who attempted to avail herself of this and return to her Catholic friends and family would pay heavily for her "betrayal of her vocation."

5. THE SOCIAL AGREEMENT IN THE LIGHT OF HISTORY

This record of life during 15 centuries in which the virtue of chastity was held to be the supreme law is surely without parallel in history; and the clerical and monastic record which I gave in the last chapter must be the most repulsive chapter in the history of religion. What, therefore, shall we think of encyclopedias and manuals of the history of Europe which suppress all these facts—indeed by implication deny them—and give their readers only a few flattering pages on the beautiful life of the monks? Even the Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics engages a monk, a resolute apologist, to write its long article on Christian monasticism. He is permitted to give an entirely false impression of it. In regard to England he is allowed to say that "the history of the four centuries from 605 to 1066 is one of the finest parts of the history of western monasticism." Shades of St. Boniface and St. Dunstan! He concludes from the fairy tale he tells, in the course of which he lies repeatedly by commission as well as omission, that "the monks accomplished a work that has been equaled by no other society down to the present day." Thus is the myth sustained that ours is a Christian civilization and is endangered by the advance of skepticism and wiser views about sex. I have quoted ecclesiastical authorities telling us age after age that the majority, often the great majority, of the monks and priests grossly violated their vows. Not one in a thousand of them did anything for civilization, and the most chaste of them, like Gregory I and Gregory VII were its enemies.

I have pointed out how, when scientific and other writers of the last century began to expose the weakness as the evidences for the creed, apologists raised the cry that morality would perish if they were demobilized. Rationalist writers had no difficulty in showing that justice, honesty, etc., are obvious conditions of a sound society, and the controversy narrowed to a concentration on the virtue of chastity. Many of the Rationalists foolishly contended that this also could be removed in its entirety to a humanist basis, but some—John Stuart Mill, for instance—recognized that it could not.

The apologists then contended that it was of vital social importance; that history shows us the great empires of the past crumbling into ruins because of the sexual freedom they permitted and that, therefore, the pit yawns for our civilization also if we sanction or suffer such freedom. Thus the idea of some dreamy Persian ascetic and of St. Paul, who were as little interested in social welfare as about the fate of the kangaroos of Australia, was erected into a social law.

Rationalists were so keen to prove that their philosophy is respectable that they overlooked the paradox of this position. The two major claims of the apologist cancelled each other. This virtue, they said, could be cultivated or enforced on a religious basis only, not on a utilitarian ground, yet it was so vital to social welfare that the most powerful civilizations of earlier times had passed into decay and death from the lack of the spiritual vitamin of chastity. I need not at this stage sort out the implications of a code of conduct which puts admiration of a beautiful nude statue or the enjoyment of a story by Boccaccio on the same level as a breach of the marriage-contract, for the central idea which gives it these wider implications is unsound. It would, in fact, be singular if a theory which was mainly a blend of a savage superstition about woman and a childish speculation that the devil had created the body and God the soul should turn out to be of high social importance. However, the short and direct answer to it is that no state ever perished or passed into decay from what the theologian calls its vices; that most states had more liberal ideas about sex-behavior in their most flourishing periods than in their decay; and that the great states which did collapse in the past were generally a little stricter in regard to sex in their final decline. In the next two chapters I will enquire in detail whether those acts which the moralist denounces so feelingly have any relation to the wellbeing of a state. Here let us glance, briefly, at the facts of history.

And the first and most outstanding fact in this connection is that the most notable period of the decay of empires was just that period when the ascetic idea was spreading from country to country. I have shown that we have reason to date its rise in the 5th century B.C. The preacher gives some plausibility in the ears of his congregation to his eloquent description of the old empires reeling into the pit on account of their vices and the world being saved by the new ethic because neither he nor they have the least knowledge of the historical truth. Celibate priests appeared in Egypt and a strict chastity was associated with the cult of Isis several centuries before the Christian Era opens. The Persian-Babylonian theory was fully developed by 400 B.C. The Jewish sect of the Essenes based its condemnation of marriage on it in the 2nd century B.C. and the strict Pharisees, from whom the sect started, were strongly imbued with it. Whether or no Dr. Bell be right about Jesus it is absurd to say that even Paul brought any new virtue of chastity into the Greek-Roman world. The Greek philosopher Pythagoras sternly preached it in Italy in the 6th century B.C., and many believe that he learned it from Egypt.

But it was just in these few centuries before Christ that the civilizations of Egypt and Babylonia sank into their final impotence, and their decline proceeded simultaneously with the spread of the ascetic idea. It was during that period that the great empire of Cyrus of Persia, which is generally supposed to have been the cradle of the idea, entered into rapid decline. It was in the 3rd, and particularly the 2nd century B.C., that Greece rapidly decayed. And if it be pointed out that the Roman civilization at last now grew in power, let us remember that it reached its height at a time, under Hadrian, when the ascetic religions—Isisian, Manichean, and Christian—did not affect the conduct of one in a hundred of its people, and it then steadily declined in proportion as those religions expanded. I am not arguing that the ascetic ideal of behavior was the destroyer of the fabric of civilization. I am not a theologian but a realist. And I would add to the paradox by

asking why the medieval nations, who were, we have seen, at least as loose in their ideals in regard to sex as any in history, have lasted so long if vice is fatal to national welfare? Or how we can be asked to believe that these particularly robust sinners were laying the foundations of the greatest of all civilizations?

Ancient Rome is the classical "awful example" of our ethical romanticists. If you have read any of this kind of literature you will know that the violence of the language of the writer or the preacher is in inverse proportion to his knowledge of the subject: the comparison between pagan and medieval morals. The Protestant historian Glover, who did know Rome, is not at all sure that it was brought down by its vices. The Protestant historian Professor Sir Samuel Dill, who knew it still better, is quite sure that it was not. And neither of these men had even a moderate acquaintance with conduct in the Middle Ages and could not make a comparison; except that Dill does say that Roman society in the last century of the Empire was at a level to which Europe did not rise again for 13 centuries. It is unfortunate that in these days of necessary specialism no expert can be equally acquainted with life in ancient medieval and modern civilizations. If he knows the record of Europe well—we will charitably suppose that recent writers on it do not—he is an amateur when he dabbles in ancient history. It is only when you concentrate on the socially significant facts and do not need to memorize the masses of facts which are just "learning" that you can make a profitable comparison. In 50 years of study, preceded by several years as a professor of ecclesiastical history (as well as philosophy) I have surely earned some title to be considered an historical expert in this sense, but I do not pose as an authority. In support of my thesis that sex-conduct was freer and grosser in the medieval than in the ancient period—and I have quoted many distinguished historians giving the same verdict—I give the facts as regards the ancient eastern civilizations on the authority of the leading experts on each who pays particular attention to morals, and for the Middle Ages I give the facts (with exact references in my larger works) from the large contemporary literature, from the 1st century to the 19th, which I have read.

In the classic case of Rome, however, there is no need to draw on ancient Roman literature, most of which I have read. The whole contention of the apologist is a miserable muddle compounded of ignorance and prejudice. He knows that the kind of folk for whom he writes never check his statements and do not reflect on the fact that he never quotes a high authority on Roman history, from Gibbon to Dill and Boissier, who says that the Empire was ruined by its vices. From one generation of preachers and apologetic writers to another certain facts are handed down, increasing in volume like snowballs as they roll, and these are hurled at innocent congregations by preachers who are completely ignorant of their significance. From Niebuhr, the historian of the Republic, the original collectors of these facts take stories of disorder in and before the age of Julius Caesar (B.C.), and from Mommsen, the great authority on the Empire, they take stories of vice in the days of Augustus, a severe puritan who exiled his own favorite daughter for her love-affairs and the poet Ovid for his amorous verse. They do not know that both these historians are skeptics who would have snorted at their idea that the Empire was finally ruined by its vices. They are so entirely ignorant of Roman history that they do not know that this period of vice instead of enervating the Romans was followed by the greatest age of the Roman Empire, the age of the Antonine or so-called Stoic-Emperors, and that it did not fall until three or four centuries afterwards.

They display the same ignorance and disregard of authorities when they turn the unscrupulous poet Juvenal into a social historian. He does not profess to do more than retail loose gossip about the generation preceding his own. The age in which he lived was the greatest in Roman history. They darkly refer

to "horrible pictures of vice" in Martial, who also lived in the greatest age of Roman history and whom, it is obvious, none of them ever read, because relatively few of his Epigrams refer to vicious types of men and he represents these as exceptional and a disgrace to society. They say that Paul tells us of "nameless vices" of the Romans and they overlook the fact that Paul not only does not give the least idea of their extent but makes the same charge against the Christians of Corinth; and we have seen that this "nameless vice," which Paul names in such plain Greek that the translators of his text have had to falsify it—he refers in coarse terms to sodomy—was appallingly common, especially among monks and priests (as Cardinal Damiani and scores of others I have quoted testify) in the Middle Ages.

But whatever truth there may be in these charges, they are, as I said, irrelevant because the greatest age of Roman history followed, and the Empire lasted a further 300 years. And so crass and confused are these apostles of virtue that they scarcely ever even look for evidence of vice in the two centuries that preceded the fall of Rome. A few appeal to the work of Ammianus Marcellinus, a censorious old soldier of the 4th century. He merely carps at the follies of a kind of "smart set" of sons of the wealthy such as is found in every civilization, and he brings a heavier indictment against the Pope and the Christian body; while better Roman writers of the time like Symmachus (in his letters) and Maccrobius boast that Roman character is better than ever, as Dill admits. These quaint sociologists, in fine, who lament that vice destroyed civilization and virtue restored it, resolutely refuse to glance at the moralists of the new Christian world after the fall of Rome. We have seen how the priest Salvianus describes it, especially in Rome. Even in Gibbon the story becomes sordid after the fall of Rome.

Authoritative historians dispute about the causes of the fall of the Roman Empire, though none of them attaches any importance to the sex-conduct of the Romans of the 4th century, which was, on the average, at least in the governing class, more sober than ever. The Empire had lost vigor since the death of Marcus Aurelius, the virtuous Stoic who had left it in charge of his depraved and incompetent son. It had been restored repeatedly, especially by Diocletian at the end of the 3rd century. It then slowly decayed under the Christian Emperors of the 4th century and, when the test came, it had not the strength to resist the tremendous shock of the barbarian invasions of the 5th century. I doubt if it could have resisted this shock at any time since the 1st century. Famine, it is generally believed, drove such a mass of horse-riding Huns from Asia into Europe that the powerful and warlike Goths fled before them; and this was the stone that let loose on the Empire an avalanche of hundreds of thousands of barbarians from the central forests of Europe.

That was the common type of fall of an empire. Periods of wealth and luxury are apt to soften the character of those who are chiefly responsible for the defense—the rulers, the nobles, and the middle-class—and if heavy pressure is brought to bear on the country while it is in this condition it collapses. The first Kingdom of Egypt fell because it was invaded by men with the horse and iron, which the Egyptians had not. The second or middle Kingdom, weakened by imperialist wars and religious quarrels, met the same fate. The third Kingdom was still worse weakened by imperialist wars and fell to robust new forces like Persia and Macedonia. No one has ever suggested an ethical theory of its collapse. Even when we recognize a softening of character as a result of a long period of wealth we do not mean a specific weakening by sexual freedom but a general enervation from luxuriousness of life. And we must not forget that the pressure of an environing barbarism was more dangerous in ancient times than it would be, if such a thing still exsited, today. The disparity of arms between the barbarian and the civilized soldier was nothing like what it is in this age of machine guns, cannon, bombing planes, and tanks.

The many collapses of the Chinese Empire throughout its history are easily understood on these lines. It was a large island of civilization in a sea of barbarism that might be lashed to fury at any time. The first Babylonian Empire fell before the iron might and military science of Assyria, and this in turn by its truculence created a powerful combination of robust enemies which it could not conquer. The second or Chaldaic Babylon similarly fell to a combination of forces, and the Persian Empire which succeeded it and lasted a much shorter time than the older empires—which is ironic when we reflect that it claims to be the cradle of the ideal of chastity which saves civilizations from ruin—fell to the more powerful combination under Alexander the Great. The still more rapid break-up of Alexander's empire reminds us that there was now another dangerous weakness. These were real empires in the modern sense, one nation extending its rule over a score of other peoples, who fought for it without patriotism if not with reluctance. I have said that if we cared to "reason" in the way these apostles of virtue do we could triumphantly show that when this idea of chastity appeared the civilizations to which it spread collapsed more speedily than ever. But as we have no sacred or economic interests to defend we recognize that the new imperialism and its wars were mainly responsible. In my "Epic of Universal History" I showed that trade did more than virtue or religion to promote civilization. Here we notice that war did immeasurably more than vice to retard and destroy it.

We cannot speak in quite the same terms about Greece. Like Italy in the first part of the 19th century, Greece was "a geographical expression," not one civilization that could make a unified defense except to meet some special emergency. But we generally think of Athens, and its experiment in imperialism and a long war with Sparta started its decline. Least of all in the case of Greece does anybody claim that vice ruined a civilization, and the best clerical authority on Greek history, the Rev. Professor Mahaffy, contends that in the century in which it fell from the great days of Pericles it was more virtuous than it had been in its golden age; yet this new virtue had not the least influence in checking its decline.

There is no need here to survey the story of all the ancient civilizations. Least restricted of all in regard to sex were, probably, those of Crete and Syria, yet they lasted at least 2,000 years and fell to superior forces because they were small and far from warlike. But this proof that it is not merely false but reckless to speak of the ancient nations being ruined by vice and the best elements of their civilization being saved by virtue would only be strengthened by glancing at later pages of history. After what we have seen of the state of morals throughout the Middle Ages it would be ironic if any person were to ask us to believe that it is the general acceptance of the new religion with its emphasis on chastity that explains the long life of the new civilizations which appeared in Europe. They are not yet half as old as Egypt was when it collapsed or as India or China is. Moreover European history has witnessed rises and falls comparable to those of ancient times. The medieval Holy Roman Empire, in the cementing which the crozier of the bishop joined with the sword of the soldier, was little more than a name after the Thirty Years War, and Napoleon rubbed the name out of the volume of history. Spain and Portugal were in the 16th century the greatest imperial powers in the world. They were unchaste enough, but does anybody suggest that their vices had anything to do with their reduction to a condition of insignificance by France and England?

This will suffice to show the reader how fantastic the claim of the apostles of virtue is as far as history is concerned, and there are other ways in which the claim could be tested if it were not too reminiscent of the proverb about using sledge-hammers to break butterflies. I would, in fact, not devote even this short chapter to it were it not for the fact that the historic claim lies behind all the insuffer-

able censorships and encroachments of the clerical organizations today. All this fussing about our films, our novels, and our dramas is quite obviously based on the theory that "vice corrodes the foundations of a civilization," and it is this piece of shoddy historical raving that is chiefly considered to provide the great proofs. Probably the Churches have received no more severe blow in recent times than the Kinsey Report. While they pretended that it was their puritan efforts to guard the American Home and the American Family that made America one of the greatest and most prosperous of modern civilizations they learn that, besides having the loosest divorce laws in many states, it has certainly not a higher level of sex-restriction than the other leading nations. Until or unless we get a similar exact report on the other countries we cannot say more than that, but the statistical sections of Havelock Ellis' works justify us in going so far.

But before I pass on to examining this puritan claim in the light of the social facts of the life of our own time I would say a word on another historical test. In two large works I endeavored to ascertain what were the social, ethical, and religious forces at work in the best period of the history of civilization. The first "The Golden Age of History" (1940) is not available to the American reader. In this I examined 15 of the peak-periods of civilization, as determined by the general agreement of historians not arbitrarily selected by my prejudices. Except for the second such age "Babylon Under the Chaldeans," about which we do not know enough to apply any religious test, all but two were periods of widespread skepticism under skeptical rulers; and these two, Medicean Florence and France under Louis XIV, had so much viciousness and cruelty that I hesitated to include them in the same list as Athens under Pericles, Rome under Hadrian, or China under Tai Tsung. In the main, I think, I added them because it was so difficult to find historians claiming any Golden Age in the history of Europe and, as usual, I shrank from the suspicion of prejudice against religion. However, my point here is that all of them except, possibly, one were periods of considerable freedom in sex-behavior. The one which I set apart is Babylon, about which we are poorly informed; but it is piquant to reflect that in general and clerical literature it has the reputation of being the most wicked of them all.

It was with the same inquiry in mind that I wrote my "One Hundred Men Who Moved the World" (Haldeman-Julius, 1931). I hardly needed to point out that I meant the 100 men who had moved the world in the direction of our modern civilization or contributed most powerfully to the development of its best elements—science, toleration, philanthropy, social justice, the check of cruelty, freedom, democracy, general education, and a growing hatred of war—so that I did not include founders of religious creeds. Nearly three-fourths of them were Atheists or Deists; or, since it is opinion in the last two centuries of comparative freedom and enlightenment that chiefly matters, all the names I could collect were those of Skeptics. One half of them were men who ignored the chastity ideal.

In whatever way you test the record of history it belies this puritan theory that liberality or illiberality in regard to sex-conduct has any relation to social welfare. We have the same situation as we have in regard to the question of religion and crime. It is said to be an issue of profound social importance yet no sociologist dare give the public a factual direction on it by comparing, as he could, the statistics of religious instruction and church-membership with the statistics of crime in any country, state, or city. We have such statistics in many cases, yet the public is led by its popular oracles in the press, pulpit, radio, etc., to cherish an opinion which is completely at variance with the facts. Still less dare any historian attempt an exact inquiry into the truth or unsoundness of this even more emphatic claim, that relaxation of the sex-clause of the decalogue means social ruin. All the special invectives which are used in relation to this particular form of transgression are showered

on any author who ventures to examine the matter critically. You may say that it matters little, as in practice men and women take so little notice either of the code itself or of theories about it, but it is decidedly of social importance that the race should not have these ambiguities and contradictions in its code of behavior.

6. THE SOCIOLOGY OF VICE

The indifference of most folk in the modern world to speculation about the code of sex-behavior springs largely from what we would almost call an instinctive feeling that the puritan theory of the social importance of vice is entirely wrong. I am not aware that any author has ever undertaken a commonsense examination of the zeal of the moralist by taking in detail each of the various forms of conduct which he condemns and considering whether in point of fact it is injurious to the social fabric or what life would be like if all the implications of the puritan ideal were enforced on us. I propose in this and the following chapter to make this simple investigation. History has a fascination for many but is regarded by the majority of modern folk as just as remote, without bearing on our life today, as the revolutions of hundreds of millions of years ago which caused the fish to live on land or brought into existence the first mothers that suckled their young. But a false version of history is the chief basis, now that psychology has abolished conscience as an imperious inner voice, of all our censorships and moral denunciations, so I have had to include a survey of it. In life today we are making history and can see more plainly the fallacy of the puritan contention.

The only difficulty is that the word chastity has so many meanings. In the two historical chapters which I gave I accepted the word in its limited conception. Only a month or two ago the state of West Virginia was stirred to its soul by a passionate discussion as to whether this virtue forbade a well-formed girl to take part in a bathing-beauty competition. She was a Catholic, and the bishop threatened her with ex-communication if she appeared in the sunlight of West Virginia in a scanty bathing costume before thousands of people. The local Chamber of Commerce appealed to the Pope to override the bishop, and the folk of the state forgot the oncoming presidential election and the threat of war in a fierce pre-occupation with the ethical problem. But the bishop acted on the strict lines of Catholic moral theology. I have no doubt that the poor man thought that he was valiantly sustaining the discipline of the Ages of Faith; when, as a matter of fact, ladies did not wear costumes at all in the baths—at many German resorts, at least—and the choicest of the prostitutes were engaged to join, quite nude, in the procession to welcome a visiting prince. However, even then the wide range of the virtue was recognized in theory. The sight of nudity even in a picture or a statue (which were as common as cats in the Middle Ages), the touch of one's nude body, the mere thought of doing so unless you promptly rebuked the devil who suggested it, was unchastity. Theologians dispute even whether married folk do not sin if they touch each other.

All these things have no more relation to social welfare than they have to the dollar-exchange. The root of the prohibition is the conviction of impotent monks that if the devil did not create the body, as the Persians said, this allurement was put into it solely as a consequence of sin; that, in short, it is in every way unclean. The gloss is now put on the law by those modern theologians who do not like the outside public to realize how preposterous their ideas are, that these things are evil because they lead to evil action. One might as well forbid men to look at the display of pretty things in the store on the ground that they dispose to theft or say that a man is guilty of murder if he merely thinks that the liquidation of moralists, for instance, would be a good thing. But we must remember that our censorships are

based on much the same idea. It is supposed that if we see bathing ladies, or ladies on the screen or stage —to say nothing of a strip-teaser in a costume an inch or two short of the peculiar standard which permits exposure of thighs and abdomen, we shall be moved to . . . I am not quite clear what the consequence is understood to be. We ordinary human beings are aware that folk do not rush from the theater or cinema with evil designs to rape even after seeing Jane Russell, and the idea that we are "filthy" if we smile at the comedian's broad joke is childish. We moderns do not allow the freedom of the Roman or of the medieval theaters or the sights that were seen on medieval streets, and even in churches occasionally. But the law, based on a consideration of the feelings of a large body of citizens and the welfare of children, may be left to the police.

A practical treatment of the subject of chastity, therefore, may almost confine itself to the conduct of the unmarried, and the straying of married folk from their contractual obligations. In regard to perversions it is difficult to see, no matter how much we may personally loathe them, how they affect the social welfare, which alone concerns me in this chapter. That the legal punishment is based really on theological grounds is clear from the fact that bestiality is penalized in the same way as inversion. When the attempt is made to justify the heavy sentence on the homosexual it is pleaded that if such indulgence were freely permitted it would injure the social fabric by diverting so many from marriage and the procreation of children. All such arguments now seem feeble in view of the increasing concern among experts about the world's food-supply and their insistence on the restriction of births.

Similarly the puritan condemnation of birth-control, which is a "mortal" (or hell-punished) sin in the Catholic Church though extensively practiced by Catholic parents in the cities, is now beginning to look like, not only an arbitrary interference with the rights of the individual but an anti-social attitude. Within another quarter of a century we shall find all parents who have a decent regard for the requirements of the community refraining from having more than two, or at the most three, children; but probably Catholic priests, seeing the opportunity to raise the ratio of their body to the general population, will continue to denounce birth-control as an unchaste act. Before the end of this century, when the appalling death-rate has been lowered in such countries as India, China, and Latin America, and the strict limitation of the soil's possibility to provide food is acutely realized, the puritan virtue of unrestricted births will be regarded as a vice, and another application of chastity will, like the old Jewish-Catholic practice of "purifying" a woman after childbirth, be recognized as an offensive superstition.

In regard to matrimonial infidelity or fidelity there is no difficulty in principle. No law or virtue that was ever devised prevented straying. In the ancient civilizations, as I showed, by a general consensus of opinion, lay and moralist, the man held himself free while the woman was bound; and that, as I said, resulted from the superior strength and dominating position of the male. Even where, as in Egypt and Babylon, the woman was supposed to be the equal of man, his position as the treasurer of the family and his generally superior strength, while the wife depended on him for her subsistence, encouraged the dual standard. In the Middle Ages, especially in view of the incontinence of the innumerable priests and monks, who chiefly turn to married women, there was less strictness on both sides, but this was modified by the fact that even law made man the master (as Paul had laid down) and empowered him to thrash his wife, who was denied the escape of divorce. Once more we have raised the married woman to a position of social and legal equality, but the unilateral power of the husband as the breadwinner and treasurer necessarily remains, and, as we now have it definitely ascertained, at least half the married men confess to straying, and the real proportion is probably much higher.

To call this violation of the marriage contract an unchaste act never did restrain it and never will. It is not a defiance of a virtue of chastity but, in most cases, a breach of contract, and in many cases a mean and furtive evasion and an unjust deception. Repeatedly members of churches are revealed by some accident to have deceived their wives like any others. For the moralist to deplore that this prosey view of the marriage contract has led to an increase of infidelity is absurd. We have no Kinsey Report of 100 years ago with which we can compare that of today, and opinions are not statistics. For the Catholic moralist, in particular, to say that we could, if we wished, tighten the bond by regarding marriage as a "sacrament" is ludicrous in view of what I have said in the last two chapters and the notorious state of conjugal morals, or husband's morals, in Catholic countries today. Monogamy, even with the modern safety-valve of divorce always did, and always will, cause in a high proportion of cases the heavy strain which leads to evasion.

In increasing numbers young folk at marriage now reserve their liberty or find after marriage that it is better to recognize such mutual freedom. The puritan may call this unchastity but we are here considering whether conduct is or is not socially injurious; and there is no definite ground to charge this matrimonial freedom with social injuriousness. Nine out of 10—or nine and a fraction—of the moralists who profess their horror at it are moved entirely by their zeal for the virtue of chastity as such and talk vaguely about social consequences because they think it a more effective language to use to the modern world. My friend, the late H. G. Wells, never recognized monogamy as monopoly, and his wives—he married twice—seemed quite agreeable. He told me that he attributed that—to put it in my own language—large geniality which made his life sunny for himself and all who knew him to the fact that he had an affair with any willing woman whom he found desirable; and he maintained that the different character of a certain literary contemporary was due to the fact that he could not do this. The pairing of the sexes in a world that is shedding the old superstition and moral intuitions is slowly working out its own solution, and no amount of arguing or denouncing will alter the course of the development.

In regard to the unmarried it is broadly true that Christianity introduced the ban on sexual relations. Rather it re-introduced the ban, for we saw that, chiefly for economic reasons, it was introduced at a certain stage of savage development and commonly abandoned again as the race rose higher toward the civilized level. In all the older civilizations, daughters remained under the ban but young unmarried men were free, chiefly in relation to professional women. Only one or two Stoic moralists condemned this dual standard. The apologist, therefore, triumphantly claims that here at least is a point on which the new religion gave the world a higher code. After what we saw about actual conduct from the 2nd century to the 19th we are not deeply impressed by his claim; and we can imagine the young men of the modern world complaining, if they take any notice what the apologist thinks about the matter, that it is ironic that the clergy took so lenient a view of the law during the ages of faith and are so indignant about breaches of it in our materialistic age.

But here again the act in itself has no social aspect, and, we must remember, it is the act in itself, irrespective of any consequences, that the religious moralists condemn. Rape does not come into consideration, for it is a particularly cruel form of violence that incurs the strong condemnation of all men and is fitly punished in all laws. Seduction or an association that is voluntary on both sides can be condemned from the social angle only on account of its consequences or possible consequences, and the censure is not then passed on the strength of a virtue of chastity but on the solid ground of cruelty or injustice. Only the callously selfish, the social undesirables, who will one day be socially ostracized like thieves, can be lightly indifferent to the implications of the phrase "The Woman Pays." In fact, we might

here bring a serious charge against the apostles of virtue; that they are so blinded by their zeal for a virtue which has no social basis that they take comparatively little notice of the real evil. During the last 100 years the social penalty against unmarried motherhood—one would almost say there was no penalty until the last century—has been such that millions of girls and young women who ought to be in the happiest period of their lives have suffered torture, and in countries like America and Britain large numbers have killed themselves or their babies. If youths were taught to think more of crime than of a vice which they suspect to be an ancient superstition the social gain would be considerable.

It is on this account that I have never cared for the phrase "free love." An act that is apt to have serious consequences for others cannot be considered "free" in a social group. Nor is it here simply a question of youth. For physiological reasons that need not be considered here the more men and their wives advance in age, the thoughts of the men turn to fresh young womanhood. The gold-digger has been a familiar figure in all periods of history. The "office wife" is as familiar in our day. The man controls the purse, as a rule, and has far more opportunities. It is another of those problems that will have to be put on some sort of reasoned basis when the relations of the sexes are regulated in the light of purely social and human interests, not on the lines of a transcendental code of behavior.

Some may suggest that a greater danger to the social well-being will multiply if the ban is removed, the orgy. Apparently this mysterious nocturnal procedure is what moralists have chiefly in mind when they speak of sexual freedom destroying the ancient civilizations. What exactly they mean they do not know themselves. Not only is the orgy something that the literary man must leave behind the iron curtain and the artist must not dream of depicting but the good puritan must not even give it a definite shape in his own mind. To attempt to picture it to oneself in any degree would be unchaste. In fact even if a moralist were to persuade himself that it is his painful duty to ascertain definitely what it means, just as he is compelled to see a film or a play or read a story which is said to be immoral, he could find no description of it. An ancient Greek writer like Athenaeus or a French writer like Pierre Louys ("Aphrodite") would give him some idea, but he would conclude that there is something terrible and unimaginable that has been omitted. There is no such thing. An orgy—whether at the court of Harum al-Rashid or Nero, of Pope Alexander VI or Peter the Great, at the French palace in Regency days or at Medmenham Abbey in Byron's time, was a number of people doing to excess in each other's company what is commonly done by respectably-married young couples in the privacy of the home; inordinate indulgence in copulation. It is just gluttony in sex as well as in food and wine. In such circumstances people do not invent or want to invent novel pleasures. Such freaks (playing at Danae, etc.) as Athenaeus mentions are unimportant.

The puritan's conception of life has been discredited by the modern scientific study of sex. The difference between a wanton and a virtuous spinster is not that one listens to the devil and the other to her good guardian angel but often just a difference in the vitality of the sex glands. Nymphomania (unusually strong sex-impulses in a woman) and satyriasis (in a man) are not double doses of original sin but expressions of anatomical differences in the same way as variations in the efficiency of the peptic glands give us the eupeptic and the dyspeptic type of person. The puritan idea of drawing up a rigid scheme of behavior and imagining that all have the same capability of complying with it is absurd. Nature is not a picture in black and white. Character has every conceivable shade of color: conduct expresses it. Repugnance to the thought of sex is as natural to a few as straying beyond the ordinary bounds is to others. Put the folk with vigorous hormones in a monastery or nunnery or other celibate institution (isolated college, etc.) and there is

an inevitable growth of homosexuality or masturbation. Restraint is of the essence of social life, but the puritan's idea of restraint and his belief that sobriety depends mainly on avoiding erotic shows or pornographic literature is outdated.

Equally absurd and archaic is his idea that a complete renunciation of sex-life in any form is a mental tonic. A reasonable temperance in both food, drink, and sex does help to maintain clarity of intelligence, just as the lack of it dulls the intelligence or clogs the entire system. I do not care how long my life lasts but I should not consider it worth living if I could not continue to enjoy a high degree of vitality and suppleness of body and brain. But an unnatural complete continence for life has no advantage whatever. Consider the monstrous leisure or idleness of priests, monks, or nuns for the last 14 centuries and note how little they have contributed to sane literature or philosophy or the intellectual work of the world. These ideas are based, as usual, on antique rhetoric about the soul and "fumes of sense obscuring the mind" and so on.

In fine, let us suppose that in this attempt to determine how much, if any, social injuriousness there is in transgressions of the virtue of chastity as such—not regarding an injury that may be done to other individuals—I have overlooked some fine shades or categories of social disservice, what would these amount to in comparison with the monstrous evils which the religious moralists ignore? As I have said, they refused to condemn slavery during 16 centuries of the Christian Era, and they still refuse to condemn war—even, now, refuse to condemn the inhuman weapons which it is openly proposed to use in the next war. They resisted, and still in large numbers, resist divorce and were indifferent to the unjust position of women. Until the last century they everywhere supported monarchy and resisted the demand of the mass of the people for political and economic justice. In every age they have been the friends of the rich, the idle aristocrats, the privileged. With their superstitious glorification of virginity they have, since the 4th century, condemned so many million men and women to a life of either privation or hypocrisy that one reads almost with pleasure how in every age large numbers, if not the majority, of their monks and nuns rebelled. In our age, when the eyes of skeptics are on them, the tyranny is worse than ever. And in so far as their rigid rules extend to the laity they still, all over the world, cause privation or ill health and give rise to a vast amount of hypocrisy, furtive deception, and even worse evils. Some day when the world is really free, a sociologist may write a large volume on "the wickedness of good men."

7. LIFE IN A PURITAN WORLD

If the clerical moralists confined their orders to what, with unconscious irony, they call their own flocks we might be content to wonder at the docility of grown men and women to the commands of a body of men who are not outstanding in the community for the kind of knowledge which is suitable for guidance today. But it is one of the conditions of their survival in the modern world that they shall prove that their institutions are of value to the entire community, for only in this way can they furnish the press and the politicians with a plausible pretext to cover their alliance with the churches. It is futile for them to attempt to prove this by professing that they are the special guardians and inspirers of justice and the obviously social virtues. These are as old as civilized life, are plainly distilled from experience of it, and are, and always were, ultimately based on that experience. Therefore in their pretensions to exercise a moral control over the community generally they are concrete and realistic only in regard to their virtue of chastity. Wars and threats of war, which are the supreme evil in human life, they push aside as "politics," in which

they must not interfere. The survival, century after century, of poverty, privation and insecurity of life they meet—when they are not dining with the rich, on whom their life chiefly depends—with a vague and futile exhortation to justice. The dishonesty that runs through political and commercial life they ignore, as the chief sinners sit in the pews beneath them. But they quiver with moral indignation at "immodest" fashions in dress, Rabelaisian wit or Zolaesque realism in stories, too esthetic covers on magazines, the open sale of contraceptives, films which suggest how men and women do really live, the frequency of divorce, the unmarried mother, the serious treatment of sex in literature, and so on.

All this is based on the idea that there is something inherently evil, ugly, dirty, etc., in sex; and we saw that this is derived from a stupid old superstition about devils, whether you take it in the Persian or the Jewish or the older savage version; and that to an amazing extent men and women ignored it even when the moralists attached to it the appalling penalty of eternal punishment. The official exponents of the theory, the Fathers of the Church, and strict churchmen generally held that sex was still unclean, though permitted to weaklings with the proper license for the propagation of the race. When the pressure of modern thought began theologians disputed solemnly—the police would not permit us to translate today many of the Latin treatises of these delicate-minded men—just what amount of pleasure married folk were allowed to enjoy apart from their painful duty of maintaining the race. The pressure of even their Catholic populations compelled them to withdraw their scrutiny of the behavior of married folk and thrust out of sight their original idea of the inherent taint of sex in all circumstances. But they reacted with a new emphasis on the sanctity of marriage and the continence of the unmarried, and said that they forbade so many things that are not forbidden in the civil code, or pressed for a more severe interpretation of the code, because "immodesty" was apt to "inflame the passions" and lead to more positive transgressions of the virtue of chastity; a supposition which is as strained and fanciful as ever. Folk generally whether they are churchgoers or no, just find pleasure in what the censors condemn.

All these encroachments on the life of the community are based on the old idea of sex and chastity, and there is no specific virtue of chastity or anything unclean in sex. The great majority of the community, which is now the law-maker, will always insist on certain limitations on the public behavior of individuals and the work of writers, artists, and actors; and the chance of inflicting pain or injustice on others restricts individual conduct. But this has nothing to do with the old idea of a specific virtue of chastity, and a life over which these censors obtained full control would be intolerable. I, at one time, had a series of debates with the puritan (Fundamentalist) leader Dr. Riley and occasionally traveled with him. Our public fights were about evolution but in private I, as the Fundamentalists had recently had an important share in securing the prohibition of alcoholic liquor, tried to ascertain how many more prohibitions he and his colleagues hoped to carry. But beyond admitting, or saying emphatically, that they proposed next to carry a total prohibition of tobacco, he was reticent. Let's work it out for ourselves.

Beer, wine, spirits, and tobacco would entirely disappear, and drastic laws would prevent any bootlegging or speakeasies. People who do not indulge in them believe that they "inflame the animal passions." Though God-made and certainly not inherited from animal ancestors, they say, they are, according to these puritans, the most dangerous realities in life. Even coco-cola and cider would probably soon come under the ban. Large industries would thus disappear, but there might be some compensation in an enlargement of the medical profession. Social life would drop several degrees in temperature, though this in turn might find compensation in an increased degree of general irritability and quarrelsomeness. Festive dinners and suppers would not

be able to sustain their old hilarity on lemonade, orangeade, and candy instead of alcohol, cigars, and cigarettes . . . But just imagine the days of prohibition back again, with the addition of a ban on tobacco and armies of armed officials preventing any evasion, and no speak-easies.

Our films, which in spite of stupid censorships still deeply offend the clergy—to be quite frank, they are far below the puritanical idea of a film—would be transformed. Ankle-long dresses for every star would be rigorously required. Bed and bathroom scenes would be strictly prohibited. Those blouses and sweaters which are carefully made so as to reveal contours would become sack-like. Possibly the notice would be issued that no actress above a certain pitch of plainness of face or lumpiness of figure would be admitted to a studio. Glamour would be written off as plainly diabolical. And naturally, the same rules would govern the theater and the cabaret. Private shows would be raided by police armed with sticks. Tia Juana, Ciudad Juarez, and other places just over the border would become rich cities, and in time the puritans would raise the cry that they have positive proof that these cities intend to attack America, so they must be atom-bombed.

Brothels and prostitutes would melt away like a mist on a summer morn, and it would probably be proposed to restore flogging in jails for bootlegging in this depraved branch of crime. A body of half a million enforcement officers, assisted by large bodies of churchgoing volunteer spies in every city, would be needed to stamp out the ladies with apartments of their own and the sugar babies. The gold-digger would try the frozen fields of Canada. Every secretary in an office in town, every pretty stenographer, every dainty nurse in a hospital would be watched like a Red. The result would be, of course, that vast numbers of girls and women who at present avoid intercourse before marriage would be too heavily or insidiously pressed or too well bribed to maintain the good resolution. I was in Canterbury, New Zealand, at one time when the puritans had captured the council and closed every sort of brothel. The result was disastrous to the "good girls" of the city. A medical man told me that in one store he had several cases of syphilis among such girls. The owner, a pillar of the church, had for some secret reason been excluded from his wife's bedroom, and had, being cut off from his usual source of relief, contracted the taint and still spread it among his girl employees.

The most extraordinary precautions would have to be taken to enforce this particular prohibition. I do not suppose that in America things would ever fall so low as in Rome, where—a well-known and conscientious British traveler reported this experience in 1947—an apparently respectable lady will approach a man and offer the services, at a price, of her daughter; or as in France, where a boy on the street may invite you to visit his sister. But, while it is absolutely certain that under a puritan regime this prohibition would be the most vigorously enforced of all, the consequences would be as disastrous as they would be picturesque. In the end a law might be passed demanding that unmarried females submit themselves to a medical examination, with a minister of religion present to see that there was no bribery, every month.

Literature, especially pictorial literature and journalism, would sink to the Sunday School level. The few condemnations of novels that there have been in recent years in America give no idea what the blight would be in a land of complete virtues. I read large numbers of both American and British novels and prefer the American, and I can assure you that in representation of actual life and in smart dialogue the American novel is one of the freest in the world. The dejected and half-ruined publishers would have to refuse all such manuscripts. Large numbers would quit reading. The dailies would have to omit all details from reports of cases with a sex-interest. The blight in the pictorial weekly and the magazine world would be immense. Most of them sell mainly for two reasons: smart stories with spice in them or advertisements of

ladies in undies. They would be among the first to feel the axe. There are thousands of advertisements published in America every week which are more stimulating than the most daring Jane Russell film; and the object of them is more to give pleasure to the male readers than to promote trade. Every advertisement of under clothing would disappear. No more charming photographs of bathing pools, or bathing beaches. No more pictures of athletic girls at play . . .

Probably the use of perfume would be strictly forbidden, and here there could be no evasion. Paint, on the face and nails, would certainly not be allowed. They inflame, or are decidedly meant to inflame, the male's animal passions. A little powder might be supplied, on license, to sallow spinsters. Styles of hair-dressing would be controlled, and beauty shops disdainfully closed. Possibly there would be, instead of bathing-beauty competitions, exhibitions with prizes for the young ladies whom the clerical judges would consider the least stimulating to the masculine eye, while the males sulk in their clubs over their lemonade, orangeade, or nutritious cocoa, and fervently express their opinion of the virtue of chastity, or sing hymns. Lodge and university commemoration-dinners would be riotous without whisky, wine and cigars. Cocktail parties would sparkle over fruit juices and cocktails of tomato juice. Dancing would be shudderingly suppressed or permitted only in such forms as the graceful minuet.

The ballet would, of course, be entirely abolished, and grand opera, which sings and talks far too much about carnal love, would be reduced to a few expurgated works of Wagner. Drama would be purified and comedy almost abolished, as the comedian's tongue is so apt to slip into a *double entendre*. Coney Island would be made safe for nuns and their little charges. Modern music would be handled roughly, as it is quite unintelligible to the puritan and he is not sure whether it excites him or no. Ancient Greek statues, even armed with fig-leaves, would be cleared out of the museums, if not destroyed, and all art-books containing photographs of them confiscated. Renaissance paintings, executed in the Age of Virtue, would suffer heavy casualties. Michael Angelo would be a marked man. Millions of books on art or translations of foreign writers from Boccacio to Zola, would provide glorious bonfires in every city, while the artists and literary men emitted curses not loud but deep. All Freethought works, from Paine to McCabe, would join the blazing fires. Prizes might be offered for new ideas on deadening the senses. Somebody might revive an idea that was in favor at one time among Dutch puritans: that piano legs and all such suggestive objects and structures should be wrapped round with muslin bags.

If the objection be made that there have been periods of puritan power in the past and they never went so far as this mass of prohibition and suppressions, it is enough to reply that they had none of our forms of entertainment and free expression to forbid. They had little difficulty with books and none with art or the theater. They had no cinemas or dance-halls, no museums or picture galleries, no bathing pools or beaches, no lingerie advertisements or cosmetics. What they did forbid in detail besides amorous conduct and necking I do not know, but they certainly put a severe check on whatever sensuous brightness, except eating, there was in life at the time. In England puritanism was not so bad. The name itself meant puritans in doctrine not morals, and as it won power by a democratic revolt against a tyrant it included known Freethinkers and liberals who joined with the illiberals in the Civil War. They made life rather insipid than tyrannical, and the English people enthusiastically swept them out of power after 10 years experience of the killjoys. In Scotland they were much harsher during their short term of power, and Scottish historians, whose reports are collected by Buckle in his "History of Civilization," tell authoritatively of the darker side of the picture. Sodomy and seduction became worse than ever, and the gloom that lay on "Bonnie Scotland" was relieved by a mass of vice which few now suspect. At one time a small body

of Covenanter troops was posted at Aberdeen. When they departed the Church assembly received reports of 65 pregnant girls and scenes of "drunkenness and debauchery." The General Assembly of the Church ordered a fast to atone the "shameful sensuality" that abounded in the "cities full of violence." The Scottish historian, Chambers, says that the increase of sodomy was such that it "makes the daylight profligacy of the subsequent reign (of Charles II) shine white by comparison." Rupert Hughes has shown that there was plenty of vice in the corresponding Puritan period in New England, and at least most folk knew what the general sourness of life was in the gay age of the Scarlet Letter.

Yet in these cases the change was from a life that had not one-hundredth part of the sensuous gaiety of modern America. It would be like the oncoming of a new Ice Age if our life today passed under the sway of folk who hold that an imperious virtue of chastity requires not only that the freedom of the individual should be so drastically controlled but that everything in life that shows or leads to the faintest tinge of sensuous enjoyment must be suppressed. To that we will never come, but a consideration of the consequence of such an occurrence plainly shows the perverse and unnatural character of the central idea itself. It is just on that idea that the censorships of our time are based.

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